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ONY OF CHRISTIANITY

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BY MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO



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NOTE

The Agony of Christianity was specially written for Messrs. Rieder's collection of studies in religion called *Christianisme*, edited by Dr. P.-L. Couchoud, of Paris. Don Miguel de Unamuno's original Spanish text has thus far remained unpublished. This English version was made from the French translation by M. Jean Cassou, published by Messrs. Rieder.

It has seemed best to retain the original title, *l'Agonie du Christianisme*, because the comprehensive and therefore rather unusual, significance of the word *agony* has been fully explained by the author in the introductory chapter.

P. L.

THE AGONY OF CHRISTIANITY

by

Miguel de Unamuno

Sometime Rector of the University of Salamanca

Unamuno y Jugo, Miguel de

Translated by

Pierre Loving

With an Introduction by

Ernest Boyd

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MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO

DON MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO was born at Bilbao in 1864, but the best creative years of his life were passed at Salamanca, where he became Rector of the University, having previously and afterwards held the chair of Greek at that famous seat of learning. In all probability he would still be there had he not found it impossible to refrain from criticizing the military dictatorship of His Excellency General Primo de Rivera who, in the autumn of 1923, had him arrested and deported to Lanzarote in the Canary Islands. From there Don Miguel escaped to France, where he continued, in the strange company of Blasco Ibáñez, to continue his protest against the régime of "the Royal Goose." In France also he wrote the present work, which was first published in French.

At that time little was known in this country or in England of a writer and teacher whose position in Spain was analogous to that of Croce in Italy, Bergson in France, or Tolstoy in Russia.

Hispanists like J. B. Trend had drawn attention to him, Havelock Ellis admired him, and in *Rosinante to the Road Again* John Dos Passos explained his peculiar position in contemporary Spanish literature. His chief work, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, had appeared in English but enjoyed no perceptible measure of recognition. The Europeans who associated their names in a manifesto against his deportation were all Continental writers. Subsequently a selected volume of his essays was translated, and his famous *Life of Don Quixote and Sancho* is announced. Thus *l'Agonie du Christianisme* is the fourth of his works to be offered to the English-reading public.

Miguel de Unamuno, as I have suggested elsewhere in an essay on him, presents a Spanish variety of Charles Kingsley's "muscular Christianity," the typical English Protestant and the untypical Spanish Catholic being alike in their religious individualism. Don Miguel has always been an ardent individualist and the least orthodox of men. If he sided with the Church and

the authorities at the time of the Ferrer case, he was not by any means a conventional loyal citizen, as his articles in *El Liberal* used to demonstrate, as well as the opposition which his appointments at the University of Salamanca encountered. Nor was he a very orthodox professor or Rector, for his pupils remember him as talking of everything under the sun rather than of the Greek authors. His administration of the University was even the subject of parliamentary debate before the War.

This ex-Rector of the University of Salamanca is a Hellenist and a Christian philosopher, the former by profession, the latter by vocation. At a Welsh Eisteddfod Salvador de Madariaga, an interesting and bi-lingual interpreter of English and Spanish literature, discovered a resemblance between the Welsh clergy present and the Basque Unamuno. "A tall, broad-shouldered, bony man, with high cheeks, a beak-like nose, pointed gray beard, and a complexion the colour of the red hæmatites on which Bilbao, his native town, is built, and which Bilbao ruthlessly plucks from its

very body to exchange for gold in the markets of England—and in the deep sockets under the high aggressive forehead prolonged by short iron-gray hair, two eyes like gimlets eagerly watching the world through spectacles which seem to be purposely pointed at the object like microscopes; a fighting expression, but of noble fighting, above the prizes of the passing world, the contempt for which is shown in a peculiar attire whose blackness invades even that little triangle of white which worldly men leave on their breast for the necktie of frivolity and the decorations of vanity, and, blinding it, leaves but the thinnest rim of white collar to emphasize, rather than relieve, the priestly effect of the whole. Such is Don Miguel de Unamuno."

In his religious meditations is heard the note of intellectual struggle in a mind torn between the emotional will to believe and the impulse of the logical faculties with their insistence upon reason. He sees the histories of religion and philosophy as inseparable because "the tragic history of human thought" is concerned only

with one subject: the rationalization of life. If reason did not (fortunately, in Unamuno's view) engender skepticism, he could not attain "the holy, sweet, redeeming uncertainty," which is "our supreme consolation." In the present volume, as in its predecessors, one may witness the search of his keen mind amidst the uncertainties which constitute the drama of religious thought. It is a mind more akin to the English Protestant than to the Spanish Catholic type. Here is an un-Mediterranean earnestness, that "alkaloid" in the Spaniard which Unamuno himself defined the Basque to be.

Don Miguel is not only the writer which this and his other translated works would reveal him. He has written travel sketches (limited to the Iberian peninsula, it is true, for the world came to him in Salamanca), poetry, and five novels of characteristically eccentric originality. One, entitled *Fog*, which was published just after the War broke out, has the advantage of anticipating Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. Two young couples, after many misun-

derstandings and proposed changes of partners, finally agree: Mauricio shall marry Rosario and Augusto shall take Eugenia, who once loved Mauricio. At the eleventh hour she changes her mind, and these two run off together. No further combinations are possible. But no end has been made of the story. What becomes of Augusto? Does he kill himself, or them? He comes to Salamanca to find his author, and tells him that he has decided to commit suicide. Unamuno points out that he cannot do this, since he does not exist, now that his author has finished with him. Augusto must live in the imagination of his creator, but he dies of overeating. Then, the doctors are unable to determine the cause of his death. Like everything else, death escapes from definition and defies the human reason.

Cast mainly in the form of dialogues and soliloquies, Unamuno's novels have little conventional appeal, interesting though they must always be to those who care for the man and his work, of which they are an integral part. All superfluous details are rigorously suppressed,

even the name of the town in *Fog;* there is little or no descriptive writing; the scene is as bare as an Elizabethan stage, stripped, as it were, for the inter-action of passions and ideas. The absence of physical details, the schematization of the characters, do not deprive such works as *Fog* and *Abel Sánchez* of a profound humanity and vitality. If, as some critics charge, his people are all incarnations of himself, filled with his own preoccupations, then they are another proof of the essential reality of his thinking, of his famous definition of the "man of flesh and bones" in *The Tragic Sense of Life."*

Salvador de Madariaga summed up his brilliant essay on the author by declaring him "the greatest literary figure" of his country, although not the equal in specific respects of Pío Baroja, Pérez de Ayala, Ramón del Valle Inclán, or even Blasco Ibáñez. "Unamuno is head and shoulders above them all in the highness of his purpose and in the earnestness and loyalty with which, Quixote-like, he has served his unattainable Dulcinea. Then there is another and most

important reason which explains his position . . . and it is that Unamuno, by the cross which he has chosen to bear, incarnates the spirit of modern Spain. His eternal conflict between faith and reason, between life and thought, between spirit and intellect, between heaven and civilization, is the conflict of Spain herself. A border country, like Russia, in which East and West mix their spiritual waters, Spain wavers between two life-philosophies and cannot rest."

These words were written before Don Miguel's peace had been destroyed and his livelihood taken from him by exile, before *l'Agonie du Christianisme* was conceived and born in that exile. Señor Madariaga would have little to add to them, for subsequent events and this volume give them an enhanced value. Perhaps they may serve, better than any words of mine, to bring more American readers to Miguel de Unamuno.

ERNEST BOYD.

THE AGONY OF CHRISTIANITY

I

INTRODUCTION

CHRISTIANITY is a value belonging to the universal spirit which has its roots in the most intimate recesses of man as an individual. The Jesuits inform us that its goal is to solve the *business* of our individual and personal salvation, and even though it is the Jesuits, chiefly, who use this expression and who thus turn religion into a problem of economics applied to divine things, we will accept their viewpoint as a preliminary hypothesis.

Christianity being a strictly individual problem and, by virtue of this, universal, I consider it my duty to lay bare briefly the personal and private circumstances in which this book was undertaken.

The military tyranny reigning in my poor native Spain had exiled me to the island of Fuerteventura where I was enabled to enrich my intimate religious experience, and my mystical experience as well. I was rescued by a French sailing vessel which cast me up on French soil and made it possible for me to install myself here in Paris. Here I now write these pages in a kind of cell not far from the Arc de Triomphe, in this Paris crammed with history, with social and civic life, where it is absolutely impossible to retreat into a recess that antedates history and which, by reason of that, may perhaps outlive it. Here I can fix my gaze neither on the Sierra, almost entirely crowned with snow, which, at Salamanca, nourished the roots of my soul, nor on the desert, the steppe that refreshed my spirit at Palencia, where the home of my eldest son is; nor yet on the sea, upon whose breast each day at Fuerteventura I beheld the birth of the sun. This very river, this Seine, is not the Nervion of my native province, Bilbao, where the pulse of the sea is felt, the ebb and flow of the tides. Here

in my small cell, immediately upon my arrival in Paris, I regaled myself with reading books chosen a bit at random. At random, which is the principle of liberty.

It was in these unusual circumstances of a character, I might say, at once religious and Christian, that Mr. P. L. Couchoud invited me to contribute a small book to his series entitled *Christianity;* and it was he who suggested, among others, this title *The Agony of Christianity.* He was, no doubt, acquainted with my book, *The Tragic Sense of Life.*

At the time when M. Couchoud surprised me with his invitation, my mind was very remote from the Gospels. I was reading Charles Maurras's *Enquête sur la Monarchie,* that concoction of long-putrid tinned meats supplied through Maurras by the royalist packing-house of the late Compte Joseph de Maistre.

In this profoundly anti-Christian book, I read the following passage from the 1903 Programme of the *Action Francaise:* "A true nationalist places his country above everything: he therefore

conceives, treats and resolves all political questions *in the light of national interest.*" On reading this I called to mind the words: "My kingdom is not of this world," and I thought that, for a pure Christian—if indeed a Christian can exist in our civil life—every political or other question should be conceived, treated and resolved in its relation to that individual interest known as eternal salvation, in its relation to eternity. And one's mother country? The mother country of a Christian is not of this world. A Christian must needs sacrifice his mother country to the truth.

Truth! "You can no longer deceive anybody," wrote Renan; "humanity, gazing into the eyes of the thinker, puts the question to him squarely, *is not the truth fundamentally sad?*"

On Sunday, November 30, in this year of grace 1924, I attended the divine service of the Greek orthodox church of Saint Stephen, near where I live on the rue Georges Bizet. As I stood pondering, on the large painted bust of Christ which fills the tympanum, this sentence in Greek, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," I felt my-

self anew cast on an island; and I thought or, rather, dreamed, that the way and the life were not perhaps coterminous with the truth, and that there might indeed be some contradiction between truth and life, for truth has the power to slay us and life can preserve us in the path of error. And this led to the thought of the agony of Christianity, of the agony inherent in it and in each one of us. Can Christianity, indeed, be conceived as existing outside each of us?

That is precisely where the tragedy lies. For truth is something collective, social, even civil; that which is true is that upon which we all agree. Christianity is something incommunicable. And that is why it agonizes within each one of us.

Agony, from the Greek *agonia*, signifying struggle. He agonizes who lives in a state of struggle, struggling against life itself. And against death. It is the prayer cried out by Saint Theresa of Jesus: "I die of not dying."

What I propose to lay bare here is my own agony, my Christian struggle, the agony of Christianity in me, its death and resurrection at every

single moment of my inner life.

Abbé Loyson, Jules-Théodose Loyson, wrote to his brother, Père Hyacinthe, on June 24, 1871:

"The opinion prevails here, even among those who have most supported you and who are without prejudice, that you write too many letters of a too personal character, especially at a moment when all preoccupations are absorbed by general interests. Beware that this be not a ruse on the part of your enemies to draw you into that field in order to wear you out."

Now, in the domain of things religious, and above all, in the domain of the Christian religion, it is impossible to treat of large general interests —religious, eternal, universal—without investing them with a personal or, I should say, individual character. Every Christian, in order to disclose his Christianity, must needs address himself thus: *Ecce Christianus* as Pilate said: *Ecce Homo*. He must needs bare his Christian soul, which he forges for himself in the heat of

the struggle, in his very agony of being a Christian. For man does not come into the world endowed with a soul; he dies with one, provided he has forged it for himself. And the goal of life is to forge a soul, an immortal soul. A soul that should in truth be our own handiwork. For when a man dies, he bequeaths a skeleton to the earth and a soul, a work of achievement, to history; provided he has lived, that is to say, provided he has wrestled with life that passes in order to attain life eternal.

And life—what is life? A far more tragic question than what is truth. For if truth cannot be defined since it is truth itself that does the defining, neither can we define life.

A French materialist, I am unable to recall now which one, asserted that life is an assemblage of functions that resist death. An agonistic, or if you prefer, a polemical definition. Life for him, therefore, meant struggle, agony. Against death, and also against truth, against the truth of death.

People speak of "the struggle for life": but

that struggle for life is life itself, and, in sum, life is struggle.

Here is something to reflect upon: this is what the biblical legend in Genesis means when it relates how death came into the world through the sin of our first parents for that they wished to be like gods, that is, immortal through absorption of the knowledge of good and evil, of the knowledge which vouchsafes immortality. And afterward, according to the same legend, the first death was a violent one, a homicide, that of Abel by the hand of his brother Cain. And a fratricide too.

Many ask themselves how do the wild beasts —lions, tigers, panthers, hippopotami—die in the forests or the deserts which they inhabit; if they are slain or if they die what is called a natural death, seeking cover to perish in solitude, like the greatest saints. And so beyond doubt died the greatest saint of all, the unknown saint —unknown first of all to himself: he who was perhaps born already dead.

Life is a struggle; solidarity to preserve life

is a struggle and manifests itself by means of a struggle. I can never tire of reiterating that what binds men most to each other is their discords. And what unites a man most with himself, what makes the intimate unity of our lives, is our inner discords, the innate contradictions of our discords. We finally make peace with ourselves, like Don Quixote, only to die.

And if this be true of physical or corporeal life, psychical or spiritual life in its turn consists of a struggle against eternal oblivion. And against history. For history, which is God's thought on earth among men, lacks a supreme human finality and marches toward forgetfulness and the unknown. Every effort of man tends to bestow a human finality upon history, a superhuman finality, Nietzsche would have said, who conjured up that absurdity: social Christianity.

II

AGONY

AGONY, accordingly, is a species of struggle. And Christ appeared bringing us agony, struggle and not peace, as he himself said.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." (Matt. X, 34-37.)

He remembered as he spoke that his own family, his mother and his brothers, had looked upon him as a madman quite beside himself, and that they had set out to lay hold on him. (Mark III, 21.) And he further said:

"I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? . . . Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from

henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three; the father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." (Luke XII, 49-54.)

What then of peace, it may be asked. For throughout other passages in the Gospels, and these yet more numerous and undoubtedly more explicit, peace is specifically referred to. But peace is, as we know, achieved through war and war is achieved through peace. And therein precisely consists the agony.

Some one might here point out that peace is life—or death—and that war is death—or life—for it is indeed a matter of little moment whether they are likened one to the other; and peace through war or war through peace, this is but life in death, death in life: agony.

Is this sheer conceptualism? Saint Paul is accordingly a conceptualist, and so are Saint

Augustine and Pascal. The logic of the passion is a kind of logic that is at once rational, polemical, and agonistic. The Gospels, moreover, are swollen with paradoxes, with white-hot bones that sear the fingers.

As Christianity forever agonizes, so also does Christ. "Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world: do not be caught asleep then." Thus wrote Pascal in the *Mystère de Jésus*. And he wrote those words in agony. For not to sleep is to dream wide-awake, to dream of agony; it is really to agonize.

They are terribly tragic, our crucifixes, our Spanish Christs. They represent the cult of Christ agonizing, not yet dead. Christ lying outstretched in the sepulchre is the dead Christ, already become one with earth, become, as it were, peace, Christ dead, interred by other dead. But Christ on the cross, whom we worship, is the agonizing Christ, crying: *"Consummatum est!"* It is to the Christ of the "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. XXVII, 46), that agonizing believers turn. Among these you will

find many who believe they are not doubting, who believe they are believing.

To doubt is to live, to struggle, to struggle for life and to live by struggle. I have already made reference to this in another of my works, recalling the passage of the Gospels where it is written: "Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief!" (Mark IX, 24.) A faith which does not continue to doubt is a dead faith.

What then is the meaning of doubt? *Dubitare* contains the same root—that of the adjectival numeral *duo*, two—as *duellum*, a struggle. Doubt, Pascalian doubt, agonistic or polemical, rather than the systematic doubt of Descartes, presupposes the duality of combat. I mean here the doubt of life (life-struggle) and not of way (way-method).

We have been trained by the catechism to believe in that which we have not seen. That is the basis of faith. To believe in that which we see—and that which we do not see—that is reason, science; and to believe in that which we will see—or will not see—is hope. And it is all

summed up in belief. I affirm and I believe, in so far as I am a poet or creator, by gazing back into the past, digging into the recesses of memory; I deny, in so far as I am a rational being and a citizen, face to face with the present; and as a man and a Christian, I doubt, I struggle and agonize by casting my eyes toward an unrealizable future, toward eternity.

Among the Spanish people, an agonistic and polemical race, exists the cult of Christ agonizing; alongside it obtains the cult of Our Lady of Sorrows, with her heart pierced by seven swords. This is not the Italian *Pietà.* We do not so much support the cult of the Son who lies dead in the lap of his mother, as that of the Virgin Mother who agonizes in grief with her son gathered in her arms. It is the cult of the agony of the Mother.

There is also, to be sure, the cult of the Infant Jesus, the Child at the Breast, the cult of the Nativity, the life-giving Virgin, suckling her child.

I shall never forget the mystic spectacle of

which I was a witness on St. Bernard's day, in 1922, at the monastery of the Trappists of Dueñas near Palencia. The Trappists were singing an impressive chant to Our Lady in their temple all illumined with candles of beeswax. Above the high altar towered an image, possessing no exceptional artistic merit, of the Virgin Mother clothed in blue and white. She was depicted as she appeared upon the occasion of her visit to her cousin Saint Elizabeth before the birth of the Redeemer. With arms stretched toward Heaven she seemed to long to fly up to it with her tender and tragic burden, the unconscious Word. The Trappists, young and old, some scarcely of an age to be fathers and others who had long passed that age, filled the church with the chant of the litany: *Janua cœli,* they moaned, *ora pro nobis!* It was a cradle song, a cradle song for the dead. Or rather for dis-birth. They dreamed that they were beginning once more to live their life, but surging backward, returning to infancy, gentle infancy, finding again on their lips the celestial taste of maternal milk,

returning to the tranquil shelter of the maternal cloister and sleeping the sleep of the unborn *per omnia soecula soeculorum*. And this aspiration, which so strongly resembled the Buddhist Nirvana—wholly a monastic conception—is also a form of agony, in spite of its appearance to the contrary.

In the Journal of Père Hyacinthe—Hyacinthe the father, let it not be forgotten—of whom we shall speak at some length later on, we read under the date of July 9, 1873, while he was awaiting the birth of the child of a marriage that was at once mystic and carnal—of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body: "May it at least rest in peace under the heart of its mother during that sweet sleep of nine months which is vouchsafed it!" This sweet sleep without dreams was the prenatal earthly paradise of which the Trappist Fathers of Dueñas were dreaming.

The Portuguese mystic, Frey Thomé de Jesus, calls attention, on the contrary, in his book *Os trabalhos de Jesus* to the travail our Lord suffered

during the nine months which he passed in the womb of His mother.

The suffering of monks and nuns, of celibates of both sexes, is not the suffering of sex but of maternity and paternity, that is, of finality. They suffer because their flesh, which embraces the spirit, may not perpetuate itself, may not propagate itself. Feeling themselves close to death, to the end of the world, to their own doom, that is, they tremble in the desperate hope of the resurrection of the body.

The Trappists of Dueñas sang: *Mater creatoris, ora pro nobis!* Mother of the Creator! The human spirit yearns to create its creator, him who will endow it with eternal life. *Mater Creatoris!* Mother of the Creator! Behold the cry of anguish, the cry of agony.

The Virgin is called the "Mother of God," *θεοτόχος*, *deipara*. "And blessed is the fruit of her womb," (Luke I, 42), it is said of the Word without which was not anything made that was made. (John I, 3.) Not only the soul, but the body as well, the body which is to be resur-

rected, yearns to create the Word, in order that the Word may in its turn create the soul and render it eternal; and the body, the cradle and sepulchre of the soul, the body where the soul is born and dis-born, dies and dis-dies. To be dis-born is to die; and to dis-die is to be born. Such is the dialectic of agony.

Perhaps one of the aforementioned poor Trappists was even then fervently praying for my conversion. And at the same time he was praying, without knowing it, for his own conversion.

Thus Christianity agonizes.

But what is Christianity? For we must proceed, it appears, by definitions.

III

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

WE must define Christianity agonistically and polemically, in its function, that is to say, of struggle. Perhaps it would be better first to determine what Christianity is not.

The prophetic suffix, *ism*,* carries with it the suggestion that it is a matter of doctrine, as are Platonism, Aristotelianism, Cartesianism, Kantism and Hegelianism. Now this is not so. In French we have instead a beautiful word, *chrétienté*, which while signifying simply the state of being a Christian, as humanity does that of being human, of being man, has come to designate the whole body of Christians, the society of Christians—Christendom. This is obviously an absurdity, for society kills Christianity, which implies an aggregation of isolated souls. On the other hand, no one speaks of

* The French word for Christianity, meaning Christian doctrine or religion, is *christianisme;* the Spanish word is *cristianismo.*

Platonianity, Aristotelianity, Cartesianity, Kantianity, or Hegelianity. And Hegelianity, the state or quality of being Hegelian, is not the same thing as *Hegelite*, the state of being Hegel. But we do not distinguish between Christianity and *Christity*. The state of being Christian is the state of being Christ. The Christian makes himself Christ. Saint Paul sensed this for he felt the Christ come to birth, agonize and die within him.

Saint Paul is the first great mystic, the first real Christian. Although the Master had appeared first to Saint Peter (*v.* Couchoud on the Pauline revelation in *le Mystère de Jésus*, II), Saint Paul beheld the Christ within himself; He appeared to him, but Saint Paul was under the impression that He was dead and had been buried (I Cor. XV, 3-8). And he cried that if Christ was not arisen from among the dead, we are of all men most miserable. (I Cor. XV, 19.) And when he was caught up to the third heaven without knowing if his body accompanied him or if he were pure spirit—and God alone knoweth

this—Sainte Thérèse de Jésus, several centuries later, was to record the identical experience—he heard *unspeakable words:* that is the only way to translate ἄρρητα ῥήματα, antithesis in the style of the agonistic mystery, or mystic agony, which proceeds by antitheses, paradoxes and by the tragic play of words. Mystic agony toys with phrases, with sentences, with the Word. It plays at creating the Word as perhaps God played at creating the World, not in order to play with it afterward, but to play while creating it, to make of creation a pastime, a game. And once it was created, he delivered it over to the disputes of men and to the agonies of religions who go in search of God. But to return to Saint Paul. During his abduction to the third heaven, to paradise, Saint Paul heard *unspeakable words* which it is not lawful for man to utter. (II Cor. XII, 4.)

He who does not feel capable of understanding and entering into the spirit of this, of knowing it in the biblical sense of engendering, of creating, may not hope then to understand either

Christianity or anti-Christianity, or history or life or reality or personality. He should concern himself with what is called politics—party politics—or pedantry, or devote himself to sociology or archeology. Not only with Christ but with all power, human and divine, with every man, living and eternal, whom one knows with a mystic knowledge through the compenetration of the vitals, as it were, it is the same: in knowing, the lover ultimately becomes the thing known, becomes the beloved.

When, for example, Leon Shestov, discusses the thoughts of Pascal, he appears not to care to grasp that in order to be a Pascalian it does not suffice to accept his thoughts: one must *be* Pascal, become a Pascal.

For my part, it has chanced on several occasions, when encountering in some book a man and not a philosopher, a savant or a thinker, in confronting a human soul and not a dogma, that I have said to myself: "Why, I have been this man!" And thus I have lived over again through and with Pascal, in his very century and

very atmosphere; and so it has also been with Kjerkegaard in Copenhagen and so, too, with many others. Is not this fact, moreover, the supreme proof of the immortality of the soul? And would these men not feel themselves at home within he as I feel myself at home within them? I shall know it if, after my death, I live thus in others. Even to-day, are there not perhaps a handful who sense themselves within me, although actually outside of me, without, that is, my feeling myself within them?

And what consolation there is in all this! Leon Shestov declared that Pascal "carries with him no consolation, no relief" and "that he kills all kinds of consolation." Many believe this to be true, but what an error it is! There is no greater consolation than that of desolation, as there is no hope more creative than that of the despairing.

It is said that men seek peace. But is this really so? It is also maintained that men seek liberty. No, it is simply that men seek peace in time of war, and war in time of peace; they seek

liberty under a tyranny and tyranny when they are free.

As to liberty and tyranny, we should not so often say *homo homini lupus* as *homo homini agnus*—man is a lamb toward man. It is not the tyrant who makes the slave but often the other way round. There was once a man who offered to carry his brother on his back; it was not the latter who forced him to it. For the essence of man is idleness; its corollary is of course a perfect horror of responsibility.

Now reverting to the subject of mystic knowledge, we may recall the words of Spinoza: *Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere.* One must neither laugh nor lament nor hate—only understand. *Intelligere:* to understand? No, not merely that, but to know in the scriptural sense of to love *sed amare.* Spinoza spoke of "intellectual love" but Spinoza was, like Kant, a celibate, and possibly he died a virgin. Spinoza and Kant and Pascal were celibates because they were not fathers; but neither were they monks in the Christian sense of the word.

When Christianism or Christianity came to birth in Saint Paul it did not appear in the guise of a doctrine, although it expressed itself dialectically; it appeared as life, struggle, agony. The doctrine was the Gospel, the Good Tidings. Christianism or Christianity was a preparation for death and resurrection, a preparation for eternal life. "If Christ has not arisen from the dead, we are of men most miserable," said Saint Paul.

One might conceivably speak of Father Paul or of Father Saint Paul, but it would occur to no one to speak of Father Spinoza or Father Kant. And one may properly speak—and indeed one ought—of Father Luther, the monk who married; but one cannot fairly speak of Father Nietzsche, although some are inclined to think that the *Beyond Good and Evil* of Nietzsche, the progressive paralytic, is the *sola fide* of the "slave-will" of Father Luther.

Christianity was the cult of a God-man who was born, suffered, agonized, died and arose from the dead to transmit his agony to his followers.

The passion of Christ was the centre of the Christian cult. And as a symbol of that passion, the Eucharist survives—the body of Christ who dies and is interred in every individual who receives communion.

It has been often said and repeated that one must distinguish Christianism, or rather Christianity, from evangelism. For the Gospel, the Evangel, is in truth a doctrine.

In what has been unjustly called primitive Christianity, in the Christianity which preceded the death of Christ, in this early Evangelism, there probably inhere traces of another religion, a Judaic religion, strictly monotheistic, which serves as the basis for theism.

The so-called primitive Christianity, the Christianism of Christ—and this is even more absurd than to speak of the Hegelianism of Hegel, because Hegel was not a Hegelian but Hegel—primitive Christianity was, as has been averred a thousand times, apocalyptic. Jesus of Nazareth believed in the early destruction of the world, and that is why he said: "Let the dead

bury the dead," and "My kingdom is not of this world." Perhaps he believed in the resurrection of the flesh in the Judaic fashion, and not in the immortality of the soul in the Platonic sense, nor in his second coming in this world. One can easily find proofs of this in any honest book of exegesis. That is, provided exegesis and honesty can be compatible.

And in this world to come, in the kingdom of God, whose early advent was awaited, would not the flesh have to propagate itself, to be sown in order that death might die?

The Gospel of Saint Matthew (XXII, 23-33) tells us—and this passage is fundamental to Christianity—that after the Pharisees had tempted Jesus by asking him whether one must or must not pay tithes to Cæsar, he replied to them: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," etc., and that, moreover, on the day when the Sadducees approached him (these did not believe, as did the Pharisees, in the resurrection of the flesh) and inquired: "Master, Moses said: If a man die, having no children, his

brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: likewise the second also, and the third, until the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine."

The agony of Christianity persists, on the one side stand the Pharisees, on the other the Sadducees.

Now when Jesus died and the spirit of Christ was reborn in the hearts of believers but to agonize there, faith in the resurrection of the body appeared and, accompanying it, faith in the immortality of the soul. And this great doctrine of the resurrection of the body in the Judaic conception of the term and the immortality of the soul in the Hellenic sense, was born of the agony of Saint Paul, a Hellenized Jew, a Pharisee who stammered out his powerful Greek polemic.

When the anguish called forth by the approaching end of the world had faded and when these primitive listeners to the words of Jesus, who had welcomed him with palms in his entry into Jerusalem, saw that the kingdom of God would not arrive upon the earth of the living and the dead, of the faithful and the unfaithful,—Thy kingdom come!—each had a foreboding of his own end in the world, in his own world, for each bore within himself an intimation of his carnal death. Therefore they had need of moulding Christianity, lest it perish altogether into an individual religion, a "religion" *quae non religat*, a

paradox. For we live united one with the other, but each man dies alone and death is the supreme solitude.

With the disillusion concerning the end of the world and the beginning of the kingdom of God on earth, history died for the Christians, in so far as these primitive Christians, the evangelists, those who heard and followed Jesus, may be said to have possessed a sense of history. They perhaps knew of Isaiah and Jeremiah, but these old prophets had about them nothing of the spirit of a Thucydides.

P. L. Couchoud is right when he says (in *le Mystère de Jésus*) that "the Gospels do not strike one as a history, a chronicle, a narrative, a life." It is referred to as the Good Tidings. Saint Paul called it the Mystery. It is in truth a revelation of God.

But this revelation of God, this mystery, was henceforth to become for Christians their history. History implies progress, change; but this revelation cannot progress, even though Comte Joseph de Maistre did speak, employing an ag-

nostic dialectic, of "the revelation of the revelation."

The resurrection of the body, the Judaic hope, —Pharisaic, psychic, almost carnal,—enters into conflict with the immortality of the soul, the Hellenic hope, Platonic and spiritual. And this is the tragedy, the agony of Saint Paul. And that of Christianity.

For the resurrection of the flesh is something physiological, something completely individual. A solitary individual, a monk or a hermit, may be resuscitated carnally and thus live, if it can be called living, alone with God. The immortality of the soul is something spiritual, something social. He who fashions a soul, who leaves behind him some created work, lives in it and with it among other men, as long as it lives. This is what is meant by living in history.

Nevertheless the people of the Pharisees, among whom come to birth the faith in the resurrection of the body, put their hope in social life, historic life, the life of a race. The true Jewish divinity is not Jahveh, but the Jewish people

itself. For the rationalist Jewish Sadducees, the Messiah is the Jewish people itself, the chosen people. They believe in its immortality. Hence the Jewish preoccupation with physical propagation, with having numerous children so that they might people the earth with them; this is the preoccupation of the patriarchate, the preoccupation with race, *proles*.

For which reason also, a Jew, Karl Marx, attempted to erect a philosophy of the proletariat, and theorized about the law of the Protestant pastor, Malthus.

The Jewish Sadducees were materialists and sought the resurrection of the body in their children. And in money, it goes without saying. . . . Saint Paul, the Jewish spiritual Pharisee, sought the resurrection of the body in Christ, in a historic Christ, not in a physiological Christ. A little later I shall try to explain what I mean by historic, a term related to an ideal rather than to anything real. Saint Paul sought this resurrection in the immortality of the Christian soul, in the immortality of history.

Hence we have doubt, *dubium*, and struggle, *duellum*, and the agony. The Epistles of Saint Paul vouchsafe us the greatest example of the agonistic style. Not dialectic but agonistic; for they do not employ the mode of dialogue; they contend and they discuss.

IV

LETTER AND WORD

AND the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father . . ." Thus speaks the prologue to the Gospel according to Saint John (John I, 14), and this Word which was made flesh died after his passion, after his agony, and the Word became the Letter. If you like, the flesh became skeleton, the word became dogma. And the springs of Heaven washed the skeleton and bore off its salt to the sea. That is what the original Protestant exegesis did, the exegesis of the men of the Letter and the Book. For the spirit, which is the word, which is oral tradition, breathes life, but the letter, which is the book, kills. Although the Apocalypse commanded that a book be eaten, those who eat a book die unfailingly. The soul, on the other hand, comes to life with words.

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. . . ." Here enters the much debated question, the agonistic question *par excellence*, of the historic Christ.

What is the historic Christ? Everything depends on one's awareness and comprehension of history. When I say, for example, as I have often said, that I am surer of the historic reality of Don Quixote than of that of Cervantes, or that Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear and Othello have made Shakespeare rather than that he has made them, the word paradox is hurled at me and people imagine that this is simply a manner of speaking, a mere figure of speech. Rather is it an agonistic doctrine.

First it is essential, above everything else, to distinguish the reality of the personality of the historic subject. Reality derives from *res*, thing, and personality from person. The Sadducee Jew, Karl Marx, believed that things mould and direct men; hence his materialistic conception of history, his historic materialism—what we might even call realism; but we who wish to believe that

men or persons mould and direct things, are feeding, with our very doubts and our agony, the faith in the historic conception of history, the personal or spiritual conception of it.

Persona, in Latin, was the actor in tragedy or comedy, he who played a rôle. Personality is the achievement that one deposits upon the doorstep of history.

Which was the historic Socrates? Xenophon's, Plato's or Aristotle's? The historic, the immortal Socrates was not a man of flesh and bones and blood who lived in such-and-such an epoch in Athens, but he who lived in each of those who understood him, and out of all those who heard him emerged the Socrates who bequeathed his soul to humankind. And this Socrates, indeed, lives on in humankind.

A melancholy doctrine! No doubt. At bottom, the truth is always sad. . . . "My soul is sad unto death!" (Mark XIV, 34). It is a hard thing to be forced to console oneself with history. The soul is sad unto death, but it is the flesh which saddens it. "O wretched man that I

am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. VII, 24) Saint Paul cried.

And the body of this death is the carnal man, the physiological man, the human thing; and the other, he who lives in others, in history, he is the historic man. Only, he who lives in history strives to live also in the flesh, to root the immortality of the soul in the resurrection of the body. Such was the agony of Saint Paul.

History, on the other hand, is reality, fully as much as, or even more so, than nature. The person is thing, for thing, *chose*, is derived from the Latin *causa*, cause. So even in repeating history one makes history. The personal doctrines of Karl Marx, the Sadducee Jew, who believed that things make men, have in themselves produced things. Among others, the Russian revolution. Lenin was indeed nearer historic reality than he knew when, on being criticized for being indifferent to reality, he replied: "Then so much the worse for reality!"

The Word made flesh strives to live in the flesh, and when death comes it dreams of the

resurrection of the body. "It was at first the idea of the Messiah and of the blessed age which he was to inaugurate which gave rise to the thought of the unjust fate suffered by the disciples who will be dead before his coming. In order to remedy this injustice it was granted that they should be reborn as they had been when alive. Thus arose the astonishing dogma of the resurrection of the body, in contrast to the Greek notion of the immortality of the soul." (Th. Zielinski, *la Sibylle*, p. 46.)

It was the Word that they believed he had brought to life. Christ, the Word, spoke, but he did not write. In only one passage of the Gospels—and even this is held to be apocryphal—at the beginning of chapter VIII of the fourth gospel, it is related that when the Pharisees brought Jesus the woman taken in adultery, he bent over the ground and wrote with his finger upon the sand (John VIII, 6). He wrote with his bare finger, without reed or ink, and in the dust of the earth, letters which the wind could easily sweep away.

But if the Word, the Spirit, did not write, Saint Paul, the Hellenized Jew, the Pharisee influenced by Plato, wrote, and perhaps even more accurately, dictated his epistles. With Saint Paul the Word became Letter, the Gospel became Book, became Bible. And Protestantism, the tyranny of the Letter, thus had its origin. Saint Paul begot Saint Augustine, and Saint Augustine begot Calvin and Jansenius. And perhaps Keyserling is not so far removed from the truth when he affirms that Christ, during his lifetime, would not have won the support of a Paul, an Augustine, or a Calvin.

Thus one grows profoundly impressed with the inner workings of the law of religious contradiction. The prologue of the fourth Gospel is the work of a bookman, a man of letters, of a biblical man and not that of an evangelist; it begins with the declaration that in the beginning was the Word ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος. It does not say Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦιν ἡ γραφή: in the beginning was the Scripture, the Letter, the Book. Certainly! Just as in the embryonic process of the fleshly man,

the skeleton develops after the skin.

Came the letter, the epistle, the book; the evangelical metamorphosed itself into the biblical. And—source of contradiction!—it was precisely the evangelical that harboured hope in the doom of history. And out of that hope crushed to earth by the death of the Messiah, sprang into life by way of Hellenized Judaism, by way of a sort of Platonized Pharisaism, faith in the resurrection of the flesh.

The letter is dead; in the letter there is no sustenance. The Gospel according to Luke (XXIV) relates that when the disciples of the Master gathered about his tomb on the Saturday after his death, they found the stone rolled away and the body of the Lord was not there; and while they were yet astonished, two men in splendid raiment came to them and said: "Why do you search for the living among the dead?" That is to say: Why search for the living Word among dead bones? Bones do not speak.

The immortality of the soul, of the soul that is written down, of the spirit of the letter, is a

pagan philosophical doctrine. It is a skeptical dogma, linked with a tragic question. It suffices only to read the Phaedo to be thoroughly convinced of this. Perhaps these pious pagans wanted to die, like the Trappists of Dueñas, in order to fall into an eternal sleep on the bosom of the Lord, in the breast of Demeter, the virgin mother, to sleep there without dreams, to end like the men of the primordial age, the golden age, of whom Hesiod says that they die as simply as if they had been overcome by sleep: *θν'ῆοκον δ' ὥσθ' ὕπνῳ δεδμημένοι.*

Saint Paul made the Gospel literary, changed word into letter. He has been called the Apostle of the Gentiles. Of the pagans? Pagan, *paganus*, means in Latin a man of the *pago*, a peasant. And the peasant, the man of the fields—another contradiction!—is the man of the word and not of the letter. The true pagan is unlettered. For is it not rather the letter spoken which reigns in rural districts, as it is the letter written which governs cities? I have very little belief in the *Volksgeist* of the German romanticists.

Unlettered people are those most likely to live in bondage to alpha and beta, to the alphabet, to the letter. The peasant has his head full of literature. His traditions have a literary origin; it is a lettered person who first invented his legends. It is from liturgical music that he has made his popular songs.

Paulinity, the religion of the letter—or should we say, rather, of the written word?—was an urban religion, a religion of the masses of workers in great centres. Thus Bolshevism, a religion of the letter, will not penetrate among the Russian peasantry, the orthodox Russian pagans, who are passionately attached to their traditional spoken letter. We thus turn up a whole world of contradictions!

And this was the agony of Christianity in Saint Paul and in the Pauline doctrine which first drew breath within him. Or, rather, which gave birth to him. This was the tragedy of *Paulinity*. The struggle between the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul, between the word and the letter, between the Gospel and the

Bible. It is all the same agony. "The thesis of the Phaedo is only a subtlety. I like better the Judeo-Christian system of the resurrection," said Renan (*Feuilles détachées*, p. 391). Read *Choses passées* by the ex-Abbé Loisy, and you will witness a similar agony.

And with the letter was born the dogma, that is to say, the decree. Struggle and agony were at the very core of dogma, because of the contradiction which dogma bore within itself, since it is the letter that kills. And thereafter followed the agony of dogma, the struggle against heresies, the battle of ideas against thoughts. But dogma lived on heresies as faith lives on doubt. Dogma was maintained by negations, affirmed itself by means of negations.

At last arose the greatest of the heresies after Arianism, which was reborn in it—the Reformation, begun by Huss, Wyclif, and Luther. It has been said that since the Reformation cut Europe in two, Christianity no longer exists. Usually this is supplemented with: "Where is the human heritage for the individual man?

Why, in his own country." This is expressed in "*La Déesse France,*" in Charles Maurras's *Enquête sur la Monarchie.*

The Reformation, which was an explosion of the letter, tried to unbind the word, to drag the Word from the Book, the Gospel from history, and to revive the ancient latent contradiction. And it was then indeed that agony became the very life of Christianity.

The Protestants who erected the sacrament of the word—the sacrament which killed the Eucharist—chained the word to the letter. They began to teach people to read rather than to understand.

It is curious—and this is only an anecdotal aside—that the mother tongue of Ignatius de Loyola, founder of the Company of Jesus, which is the same as the mother tongue of the Abbé de Saint-Cyran, of Port Royal, and the same as that of my parents and all of my ancestors, *Euskera* or the Basque speech, began to be written thanks only to the Protestant movement. The translation of the New Testament into

Basque, made by Jean de Liçarrague, a French-Basque Huguenot of Briscous, was one of the first books, perhaps indeed the second, to be written in this language.

They wanted to fix the word along with the letter, but the agony only grew more intense. Bossuet could wisely say: "You change, therefore you are not truth!" But he might be answered: "You do not change, and therefore you are dead!" The Catholic church and the Reformation began, next, to struggle one against the other, and each within itself; the Roman church to Protestantize itself, the Reformation to become Roman.

What had to come to an end, however, was that paganized Christianity solidly petrified in the Holy Roman Empire, the Christianity of the wars of the Papacy and the Empire. This marked the end of the United States of the Occident, and the beginning of the era of nationalities, of the goddess France, the goddess Germany, the goddess England, the goddess Rome, and the poor subgoddess Italy. And henceforward citizens who

called themselves Christians might of course unite for a patriotic, national or economic-social purpose, but never again for a purpose purely religious. Spanish traditionalism will brandish its device: "God, country and king"; Mazzini will cry: "God and the people!" But this God is not the God of the Christ who fled into the solitude of the mountain when the multitude wanted to proclaim him king.

During one of our civil wars in my native Basque country, the war of 1873-1876, the Carlist General Lizarraga—it was a Lizarraga who translated the Gospels into Basque and it is also the name which my children bear through their mother—in an attack upon the liberals, hurled to heaven this unconscious blasphemy: "Long live God!" One may say: "God lives." But "Long live God!"—in the subjunctive, or desiderative? Or perhaps in the imperative mood?

The Reformation strove to bring religion back to life by way of the letter, and it ended by dissolving the letter. For free investigation is the death of the letter.

V

ABISHAG THE SHUNAMMITE

THE first book of Kings, chapter I, begins thus:

"Now King David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. Wherefore his servants said unto him, 'Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat.' So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not."

We are next told that Adonijah, son of Haggith, rose up saying that he would reign after the death of David, and he gathered together his forces, but the prophet Nathan said to Bathsheba,

mother of Solomon, that it was he and not Adonijah who was to succeed David. And he said that Bathsheba was to go to see the great king, her companion in sin, and to draw from him a promise that his successor on the throne was to be Solomon, the child of sin and not Adonijah, who already was offering sacrifices and comporting himself like a king. The prophet Nathan stood by Bathsheba in her undertaking. Meanwhile poor Abishag, the last and virginal wife of the great king, continued her ministrations, far from all plots and conspiracies. King David swore to Bathsheba that Solomon would succeed him on the throne.

Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, "Let my lord king David live forever."

David then called for the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoaida, to consecrate Solomon king over Israel; this they did in the middle of a great crowd, crying, "God save King Solomon." Meanwhile poor Abishag of Shunam, innocent of all politics, con-

tinued to soften the dying agony of David with her tender caresses.

The partisans of Adonijah, Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest, and others, dispersed. But Adonijah, fearing the new king, went to the altar and laid upon it his horn, revering Solomon as king.

The second chapter tells of the advice which David gave to Solomon, the son of sin, at the moment of his death. "So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David."

Although the biblical text does not say so, David must have died in the arms of Abishag, the Shunammite, his last wife, who softened his agony with her gentle embraces; perhaps she cradled him in his last sleep with a mother's lullaby. For Abishag, the virgin whom David had not known—as she indeed had not known him—Abishag was the last mother of the great king.

When Solomon was installed upon the throne of his father David, Adonijah, the repulsed pretender, sought out Bathsheba and persuaded her

to ask Solomon to give him Abishag of Shunam, widow of David, as his wife. The king was angered by this demand, for he recognized the shrewdness of his eldest brother who was thus trying to weaken his power and drag him from his throne. And he swore to kill him.

Solomon, wise, sensual, versed in politics, was a civilized king, a king of civilization. And we know nothing more of poor Abishag, the Shunammite, who languished for love of David, the great king who was dead, the husband of her virginity, the damsel who mourned for him with hot tears and wished to bring him back to life. The wise king Solomon reigned and established his harem.

Is not the allegory plain?

David has been for Christians a symbolic figure, a prefiguration of the God-Man, of the Christ who was to come. The amorous soul tries to rekindle life in him in the agony of approaching death by means of the tender caresses of flaming love. And since this passionate soul cannot know its beloved, and since—which is still more terrible—it cannot be known by its be-

loved the soul languishes of unsatisfied love.

To know in the scriptural sense means knowledge closely allied to the act of carnal and spiritual union, the act by which children are begotten, children of flesh and spirit. This interpretation may well give us pause.

In Genesis, Adam and Eve were commanded to increase and multiply (I, 28) before they were forbidden to taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (II, 17) which, according to the Tempter, would make them like unto gods; in spite of this, the intimate Christian tradition, especially the popular tradition, persists in seeing original sin, what we call the fall of our first parents, merely as carnal temptation. Yet with this so-called fall history began, and all that we style progress.

To know, then, is in effect to create; and all living knowledge pre-supposes penetration, a fusion of the bowels of the spirit that knows with the thing that is known. Especially is this true if the thing known is another spirit. And still more if the thing known is God, God in Christ or

Christ in God. This is why the mystics speak of spiritual marriage and they inform us that mysticism is a sort of meterotica, a beyond-love.

It must be admitted that this mystic or creative knowledge is not what is known as rational knowledge. But then, the devil only knows what the rationalists call reason! *Ratio* is one thing and *Vernunft* is another. I read, for example, in the works of a rationalist, Leon Shestov, touching Pascal: "The fundamental condition of the possibility of human knowledge consists, I repeat, in that the truth can be perceived by every normal man." What is a normal man? Perhaps the same thing as the average man, *l'homme moyen, der Durchschnittsmensch.* That is to say, a quite fantastic entity: *Phantasia non homo,* as Petronius says. And it is of these poor normal men, who perceive the rational truth and nothing more, that another agonistic polemist, Comte Joseph de Maistre, wrote not without a touch of arrogance: "They have nothing but their reason!" Poor human reason, and not divine creative truth.

Le pur enthousiasme est craint des faibles âmes
Qui ne sauraient porter son ardeur et son poids [1]

sang Alfred de Vigny, another Pascalian, in his *Maison du Berger*. And one must carefully observe the original meaning of enthusiasm. ἐνθουσιασμός,—to be filled with God. The enthusiast is a man who is filled with God, who becomes God. And this can only happen to a poet, to a creator, never to the normal or average man.

Et n'être qu'un poète est pour eux un affront. [2]

"They have nothing but their poetry!" cry the rationalists in turn. Who, then, is right? Reason, to be sure, say the rationalists. And poetry, say the poets.

Poor Abishag, the Shunammite, her soul hungry and thirsty with spiritual maternity, fondly enamoured of the great king who was dying, tried to reawaken him, to cherish him, to breathe life into him, to bring him back with her kisses and

[1] Weak souls fear pure enthusiasm and know not how to bear its ardent weight.

[2] And to be merely a poet is an insult to them.

embraces. And she buried him within herself. And David loved from the bottom of his heart this poor girl who rekindled him during his death throes, but he could not know her! Terrible fate for David! And terrible for Abishag! For whom was it more terrible?

Which is the more terrible for a soul, not to be able to love, or not to be loved? Not to be known or not to be able to know? Not to be created or not to be able to create? To be powerless to receive life or to be powerless to give it? Saint Theresa of Jesus pitied the Devil because he could not love. And Goethe said of Mephistopheles that he was the force which, wishing to do evil, did good, and wishing to destroy, yet constructed. That is to say that hate, and especially envy, are forms of love. True atheists are the most devoted lovers of God.

A great Spanish politician, Don Nicolas Salmeron, was in the habit of saying that one lost the virginity of faith in order to acquire the maternity of reason. But there is a maternal virginity and a virginal maternity. And sometimes

virginity, strictly speaking, is lost without the acquisition of maternity, or paternity, especially if the blood be infected with sin. There are eunuchs, like the Ethiopian eunuch of Candace, of whom the Acts of the Apostles made mention, who achieve procreation through the spirit.

The poor soul hungering and thirsting for immortality and the resurrection of the flesh, hungering and thirsting for God, for the God-Man in the Christian fashion, or the Man-God in the pagan way, consumes its maternal virginity in embracing the eternal agonist.

There are other books which tell how Israel made the transition from monocultism to monotheism, and still other books where you can learn what transpires when a God makes himself man or a man becomes God. I wish to speak here only of the intimate meterotica, of mystic experience, and of the agony of the soul over the agony of God, the agony of love, and of knowledge which is love, and of love which is knowledge.

The soul delivered up to its agony of love and

of knowledge scarcely takes account of the doings of a Solomon,—his political achievements, history, civilization, his temple—which is to say, of the Church. And if it does glance in that direction, it is for the purpose of appeasing somewhat its agony—and because every soul is the child of a contradiction. But alas! Abishag need not always put off Adonijah. Imagine Abishag married to Adonijah and the mother of his children, and Adonijah struggling against Solomon, and Abishag still in love with David. There is only one great love, the first and the last; imagine, in the soul of Abishag the Shunammite, the love of David struggling with her duty toward Adonijah, the son of David. What a tragedy!

Will the embraces and kisses of Abishag work the miracle of bringing David back to life?

The miracle! Here is one of the most confused concepts, especially since faith in the miracles of faith has been replaced by faith in the miracles of science.

"Savages are not astonished by the prodigious miracles of scientific achievement," people tell

us. It seems that when a savage sees an aeroplane in flight or hears a phonograph play, he manifests no amazement. Obviously: for he is used to seeing an eagle fly, a man or a parrot who speaks, and one more miracle of that sort does not surprise him. The savage lives in the midst of mysteries and miracles. And the savage who is born and reared among a people which calls itself civilized never loses faith in miracles, neither in those of faith nor in those of science.

On a certain occasion a lecture on astronomy was being given before a public gathering. The audience, made up of manual workers and clerks, men without scientific training, displayed stupefaction on learning how many million miles separate the sun from Sirius. "But how can the distance be measured?" they wanted to know. And they added: "The miracles of science!" The following day an ingenious man tried to explain to them how these distances are calculated, and when they were made to understand that, apart from a few complications, the method did not differ materially from the process by

which land is surveyed or the height of a mountain is gauged, they felt a profound scorn for science. There chanced to be among them a number of social mystics, men who talk about scientific socialism!—that same scientific socialism that ended in the bolshevist miracle.

Maurras wrote in the *Enquête sur la Monarchie:* "I do not know what General André, who is supposed to be a Positivist, thinks of it, but his master and mine, Auguste Comte, always considered Catholicism the necessary ally of science against anarchy and barbarism. He used often to say: let those who believe in God become Catholics, and those who do not believe become Positivists. . . .He sent one of his followers to Rome to treat with the Jesuits. This project came to naught through a misunderstanding, but on leaving the Jesuits, Comte's representative pronounced these grave words: *'When the political storms of the future will make manifest the intensity of the modern crisis, you will find the young Positivists ready to die for you as you are ready to die for your God.'*

"Divided as to the things of heaven, Positivism and Catholicism agree about the things of the earth. M. Accard, the follower of Bonald and also of Taine, in one of Paul Bourget's novels, represents to my mind a kind of Positivist. . . .

"The Church and Positivism tend to fortify the family. The Church and Positivism tend to strengthen political authority as having its source in God or in the highest laws of nature. The Church and Positivism are the upholders of tradition, of order, of the mother country, and of civilization. The Church and Positivism, in a word, are faced by the same enemies. Moreover, there is no French Positivist who loses sight of the fact that although it was the Capets who made France, the bishops and the priests were their first collaborators."

All this has to do with the kingdom of Solomon and the dissensions of Solomon and Adonijah; it has to do with Catholicism, in short, but scarcely with the reign of David, and still less with his agony, the agony which is the very life of Christianity.

And just what was the love of Abishag? Faith? Hope?

I have just finished reading "*Variété*" by the poet, Paul Valéry, who says: "Hope is merely man's distrust of the precise forecasts of his mind. It suggests that all conclusions unfavorable to the person who hopes must be an error of his mind."

Auguste Comte asked that those who believe in God should become Catholics, and Louis Veuillot, another precursor of *l'Action Française*, in addressing himself to the sly Henri Rochefort said: "Monsieur le comte, you who are so light-hearted, we lesser folk have need of God, or at least of men who believe in God." But as Veuillot established a difference between "to believe in God" and "to believe there is a God," people who, like myself, are not French by birth, cannot understand this need of men who believe in God. We will, I think, have to give up trying to understand, for this same Veuillot once observed that "he does not learn French who wills to do so; one has to be born

for it." And he adds: "And why learn French? Because it is a beautiful and noble language. One does not know French, or speak it or write it, without knowing many other things which go to the making of what used to be called an *honnête homme*. It is difficult to lie in French. To speak French one must have nobility and sincerity at the bottom of one's soul. You protest, bringing forward Voltaire. Voltaire, who was no fool, spoke a desiccated language, already notably debased."

I shall not bring forward Voltaire, who was certainly not a Jesuit, although he was something far worse; I repeat that I will never be able to distinguish between *creer en Dios* and *creer a Dios*, nor in what fashion people who believe in God must make Catholics of themselves. As for letting oneself be massacred for the God of the Jesuits, that may be a question of policy. Men let themselves be massacred for an idol. But there are very few who have sufficient courage to rekindle life in their dying God, to create life out of agony.

And this David whom Abishag longed to bring back to life with her kisses and her embraces, this Christ who was agonized, will he take care that God his Father save us? Here we are speaking of justification which is the mainspring of morality.

I have been reading Leon Shestov on the terrible dilemma which Erasmus presented to Luther: whether we are saved by good works or by the grace of God, which is arbitrarily bestowed upon some and denied to others. "Where is justice?" asked Shestov, and continues:

"Erasmus did not have in mind any discussion of the Bible or Saint Paul. Like everybody else he condemned Pelagius and accepted the doctrine of Saint Augustine concerning grace, but he could not admit the monstrous thought that God was *beyond good and evil;* that our free will and our willingness to submit ourselves to laws might be meaningless to the supreme tribunal; that before God man possesses no defense, not even justice. 'Thus,' wrote Erasmus, 'thus have thought and still think nearly all men;

one might say, simply, all men.' "

All men, perhaps, but all Christians, no! Christians cannot believe that. And as for saying that God is beyond good and evil, no. Beyond, *Jenseits,* is the Germanic formula of the progressist, Nietzsche. God is within good and evil and envelops them, as eternity is within the past and the future and envelops them, and is no wise beyond time. And what after all is justice? In morality it is something; in religion, nothing.

VI

THE VIRILITY OF FAITH

PÈRE HYACINTHE, of whom we shall speak at length later, and whose childhood memories cluster around a home filled with "a sadness peculiarly Catholic, the suffering soul of his revered father and the weary soul of his good mother" (Houtin, *le Père Hyacinthe*), this poor Père Hyacinthe who dreamed of finding the Church in the garden and in the cell of his convent, at one time engaged in correspondence with Ernest Renan, and on May 11, 1891, wrote to him as follows:

"Is it an illusion? Is it only a memory? Is it still a hope? You will permit this last hypothesis to my naïve and robust faith of a spiritualist and a Christian. Besides, I so firmly believe in the survival of souls and their ultimate salvation that I do not despair of being fully in accord with you in another world, if not in this one."

The "naïve and robust" faith of Père Hya-

cinthe did not grasp that illusion, memory and hope are not three distinct hypotheses, but one; that hope is a memory, and that both of these are illusions, and that faith is, according to Saint Paul, "the substance of things hoped for." Paul said of that which one hopes for that it is an act of will. But does not memory also partake of the will? This same Saint Paul said, with something of a Pindaric accent, that eating and drinking, the feast and the Sabbath, are a shadow of the future life. And memory is a shadow of the future even more than hope is a shadow of the past.

In the journal of Père Hyacinthe we read under the date of October 18, 1892: "The thinker affirms or denies; the intellectual power of Renan has not gone beyond doubt. He lacked virility."

"He lacked virility!" For the monk, for him who wished to be a father and to leave his carnal seed in the world of the resurrection of the dead, the fact of transcending doubt, of affirming or denying, of believing or not believing—and not

to believe is to believe since "I do not believe in the resurrection of the dead" can become "I believe that the dead do not arise, that the dead die"—all that was virility! Faith, daughter of virility! Affirmation or negation, dogma, son of virility!

Virility derives from *vir*, man the male of the human species. The same root forms *virtus*. And faith, according to the Christian theologians (and how contradictory are the terms Christian and theologian!), is a virtue pertaining to divinity. Not a theological virtue, for there are no theological virtues, unless you count as a virtue the *furor theologicus*, progenitor of the Inquisition.

But let us examine briefly this notion of virility, since the monk appears to think that to affirm or to deny, "to go beyond doubt," is not an intellectual power, but an attribute of the will. Let us examine the will and the will to believe.

The pragmatist, William James, another despairing Christian in whom Christianity agonized, wrote a whole book on the will to believe.

Has this will anything to do with virility? Is virility a source of will?

Schopenhauer, who thought so, and who placed the center of volition in the organs of virility, praised and admired us Spaniards because we agree with him in this. He cites in support of this view certain popular expressions current in Spain, vulgar and vivid expressions. The word designating these organs is always in the mouths of Spaniards who believe themselves to be men of will, energy and action. And one hears the most horrible blasphemies in which the holy name that ought to be sacrosanct is used as in that phrase from the Satyricon of Petronius concerning a man who *putabat se coleum Iovis tenere*. But is this the will?

The Spanish word *voluntad* is a word without live roots in present-day colloquial speech. In French *volonté* is related to *vouloir*, to the low Latin *volere* and to the classic *velle*. But in Spanish we have not the derivative of this Latin root; for *vouloir* we say *querer*, from the Latin *quaerere*, to search for, to quest. And from

querer we have the substantive *querencia* which is applied only to animals and signifies the attachment which they have for a place or for a person. The Spanish word which is derived from the organs of virility refers not to the will but to desire,—*gana*.

Gana! Admirable word! *Gana* is probably an expression of Germanic origin although Spanish is the most Latin of the Latin languages—even more Latin than Italian—and contains the fewest number of Germanic elements. *Gana* is something like desire, humor, appetite, longing. There are *ganas* for food and drink, and for their evacuation. There are *ganas* for work, and more especially *ganas* for idleness. As somebody once said: "It is not that I have not the desire to work; it is that I have the desire not to work." And the *gana* of idleness is *desgana*, dis-desire. Virility is moving towards its suicide; its road is the road of solitude, of eunuchism. That is what frequently happens to neurotics afflicted with voluntary apathy.

How accurate and how profound is the phrase

"spiritual lust." The lust of the solitary onanist in the style of poor Huysmans—another agonizing soul!—when he started on his quest after Christian monastic faith, the faith of the lonely souls who renounce carnal paternity.

No me da la real gana! No me da la santisima gana! "I have not the royal, the all-holy desire," a Spaniard will say. And he also says, euphemistically, "that doesn't come out of my . . . virility!" But what is the source of this royal and most holy desire?

La gana, as we have said, is not an intellectual faculty. And it can fulfill itself in *desgana.* Instead of will it engenders not volition but *nolitian,* from *nolle,* non-longing; and this *nolition,* the daughter of *desgana,* leads to nothingness.

Nothingness, *nada!* Still another Spanish word pregnant with life, full of profound resonances, a word which poor Amiel—another solitary, and how he struggled against virility!—engraved in Spanish in his *Journal intime. Nada!* That in which faith in virility and the virility of faith finally ends.

Nada! This is the word which has produced that individual Spanish nihilism—it is better to call it *nadism* to distinguish it from Russian nihilism—which appears as early as Saint John of the Cross, who was a pale reflection of Fénelon and Madame Guyon, and which is called quietism by that Spaniard of Aragon, Miguel de Molinos. No one has better defined *nadism* than the painter Ignace Zuloaga, who, on showing a friend his portrait of *The Bottleseller of Segovia*, a monstrous deformed creature in the Velasquez manner, with his leather bottles strung about him, said: "Ah! If you could only see him! What a philosopher he is! . . . He says nothing!" It was not that he said there was nothing, that everything is reduced to nothingness: but simply that he said nothing. Perhaps he was a mystic submerged in the obscure night of the spirit of Saint John of the Cross. Perhaps all the monsters painted by Velasquez are mystics of this sort. May not our Spanish painting be the purest expression of our virile philosophy? The bottleseller of Segovia, in saying nothing

about nothing, is freed from the obligation of thinking. He is a real free-thinker.

The faith of virility? Rather than faith, rather than the will to believe, we might call it the longing or lust to believe, the appetite for belief, and this comes from the flesh, which, according to the Apostle, lusteth against the spirit although he speaks of the lusts of the flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

The flesh which grows sad after it has sown its seed the while the whole of creation groaneth and travaileth. Yet it is necessary to propagate the flesh and at the same time to husband virility in order to engender sons of the spirit. By which shall we be saved? By those of the flesh through the resurrection of the flesh, or by those of the spirit through the immortality of the soul? Aren't these in essence two reciprocally contradictory survivals?

Yet the flesh, according to Saint Bernard—precursor of the nature-loving Franciscan piety, so indulgent toward "brother pig" which is the body—is a very good and very faithful com-

panion of the good spirit, *bonus plane fidusque comes caro spiritui bono.* Need I quote here Juvenal's *mens sana in corpore sano?* But perhaps the perfectly healthy body has a soul abysmally sunk in nothingness like the bottleseller of Segovia.

Longings to believe! Saint John of the Cross mentions the "appetite for God" and this appetite for God when God is not the inspiration thereof, that is to say, when it does not issue from grace, "possesses the same substance and the same nature as if it were close to matter and natural objects . . . and it is nothing but nature and will always remain so, if God be not in it. His commentator, Jean Baruzi, adds: "The appetite for God is therefore not always appetite according to God."

"Appetite is blind," says the mystic. But if it is blind, how can it believe, since believing is seeing? And if it does not see, how can it affirm or deny?

"For all that is in the world, is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of

life," says the first of the epistles attributed to Saint John. And it is also the lust of the flesh to seek God in the world, to seek him in order that the flesh be resurrected. If it be agonistic fanaticism to wish to propagate Christianity by the sword, by repeated blows with the cross, by crusades, it is also agonistic fanaticism to seek to propagate by the carnal procreation of Christians, by carnal proselytism, by a sort of vegetative propaganda.

The crusade is also a species of virility; it springs from free will and not from grace. Each crusade is one of the most agonistic acts of Christianity. He who would impose a faith upon another by the sword seeks to convince himself. He is asking for signs, dreaming of performing miracles in order to prop up his own faith. Every crusade by the sword ends in the conquest of the conqueror by the conquered. And the conqueror becomes a *nadist*.

The celibate, the active monk, does well to husband his virility. Balzac, who bequeathed to us so many spiritual children—a whole race—

and not one carnal child that we know of, wrote a profound study of provincial covetousness in the *Curé de Tours* (where we read those admirable lines about the "*città dolente* of the old maids" apropos of Mademoiselle Salomon who became a mother while remaining a virgin), terminating this psychological gem with an immortal page on celibacy. He begins by presenting the terrible Pope Hildebrand: only a celibate may be infallible; only he who husbands his carnal virility may affirm or deny with impunity, and say, "In the name of God I excommunicate thee," while thinking within himself, "God in me excommunicates thee, *anathema sit!*" Then he speaks of "the seeming selfishness of men who carry in their breasts a science, a nation, a body of laws . . . in order to give birth to new peoples or to produce new ideas." This is what Balzac calls "the maternity of the masses"; maternity, mark you, not paternity, just as he says *give birth to*, and not beget. Then he adds that these men are forced to "fuse in their powerful intellects the nourishing breasts of woman

and the strength of God." Is the strength of God virility? Is God male, or female? In Greek, the Holy Ghost is neuter, but it is identified with Saint Sophia, the Holy Wisdom, which is feminine.

It is well to husband virility, but does this resolve the agony? Agony is the title of the last part of that terrible philosophic study—for so the author himself called it—*la Peau de Chagrin*. At the end, the protagonist, who struggles, who agonizes, Rafael de Valentin, dies prone on his wife Pauline, sinking his teeth in her breast, while she says to the old servant, Jonathas: "What do you want? He's mine, I have killed him. Did I not predict it?"

And let the reader not be surprised that in this essay on the agony of Christianity we refer to these two works of Honoré de Balzac, who was an evangelist and a Christian in his fashion. Let us however return to Saint Paul.

The Apostle Paul knew not woman, and counseled those who felt themselves capable of it, to withhold themselves. Thanks to this contin-

ence he was able to beget in Jesus Christ, through the Gospel, not sons of flesh but children of God, children of the free-woman and not the bond-slave. To those who had wives he recommended that they live as if they had none. But for the weak, for him who could not achieve what he desired but the evil which he desired not, who was seized not by the will of the spirit which emanated from God, but by the lust of the flesh, daughter of the earth, it would be better to marry than to burn. Woman thus becomes a remedy for concupiscence.

A remedy for concupiscence! Poor woman! She in turn is redeemed by producing children, if it happened that she could do nothing else. For man does not issue from woman but woman from man, since Eve was fashioned from the rib of Adam. However, the Virgin Mother, of whom the virile apostle to the Gentiles never speaks—obviously!—was not born of a rib of Christ, but He, Jesus Christ, was born of a woman.

Christ was born of a woman. Even the his-

toric Christ, he who came back from the dead. Paul tells us that Peter was the first by whom Christ was seen—he does not say that Peter beheld him, but that Christ was seen by Peter, in the passive mood—and the last by whom he was seen was Paul, "the least of the Apostles." But the fourth Gospel, which some might call the feminine Gospel, tells us that the first person to whom the resurrected Christ appeared was a woman, Mary Magdalen, not a man. Christ was seen by Peter, but heard by Magdalen. When he appeared to her in the spiritual body, in vision, she did not recognize him until she heard him say lovingly: "Mary!" She replied: "Rabboni," which is to say, "master." And Christ, who was not a pure vision, a speechless figure, but who was the Word, addressed her. And Jesus said to Magdalen: "Touch me not!" He who had need to touch in order to believe was Thomas, a man. He must needs see on the hands of Jesus the stigmata, touch with his finger the marks of the nails, see by touching. To him Jesus said: "Because thou hast seen thou hast

believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." It has been said that faith consists in believing that which one has not seen but heard. Christ after having said to Magdalen: "Touch me not," said to her: "For I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren and say unto them that I ascend to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God." And Mary went, and told what she had seen and heard.

The Letter is seen, but the Word is heard. Faith enters by the ear. Paul himself, being ravished to the skies, heard *unspeakable words*. The good Samaritan heard Christ. And Sarah, though past age, was delivered of a child by faith; and Rahab, the harlot, perished not with them that believed not. Moreover, it was not a woman but a eunuch, the Ethiopian eunuch under Candace, who read Isaiah and believed because he heard the Apostle Philip preach.

Is faith passive, feminine, the daughter of grace, and not active, masculine and the product

of free will? The beatific vision is good for the other life. Is it vision? Or hearing? Faith in this world comes from Christ who is risen from the dead, and not from the flesh, from the Christ who was a virgin, of whose body the Christians are the members, according to the Pauline polemic.

Pagan mythology presents to us a man, a male god who, without the aid of woman, has a daughter; namely, Jupiter, from whose head sprang forth Minerva.

Faith that is veritably alive, living on doubts and never going beyond them, the faith of Renan, is a will to know which is transformed into a will to love, a will to comprehend which becomes in turn a comprehension of will and not a longing to believe which is realized, through virility, in a state of nothingness. By way of agony, to be sure, by way of struggle.

Virility, will, desire; faith, femininity, the woman and the Virgin Mary! Mother of faith also, and mother of faith by virginity.

"I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!" "I

believe" means "I want to believe," or, rather, "I have the desire to believe," and represents the moment of virility, the moment of free will which Luther called "slave-will," *servum arbitrium*. "Help Thou mine unbelief" represents the moment of femininity, that of grace. And faith, although Père Hyacinthe wished to believe otherwise, emanates from grace and not from free will. Do not believe him who nurses a desire to believe. Virility alone is sterile. The Christian religion, on the other hand, has conceived of pure maternity without the intercession of man, faith by pure grace, by grace made effective.

Faith by pure grace. The angel of the Lord entered the chamber of Mary, and, greeting her, said: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with the Lord," and he announced to her the mystery of the birth of Christ and she asked him how that could be since she had known no man, and the angel enlightened her. And Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word." And the angel departed from her.

Full of grace, κεχαριτωμένη, an expression applied only to a woman, the symbol of pure femininity, of virginal motherhood, one who had no need to transcend doubt because she had never doubted. Nor had she need of virility. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

Certain tiny threads floating in the wind, upon which spiders launch themselves in mild and even stormy weather—called by Hesiod "floaters"—are known as "Virgin's thread." Seeds may be winged, as we know, but these spiders spin from their own entrails the frail filaments from which they seem to fling themselves into unknown space. Terrible symbol of faith! For faith depends upon virgin thread.

It is said that when the scorpion finds himself girt with flame and menaced by a fiery death, he plunges his own poisoned barb into his head. Do not our Christianity and our civilization represent a suicide of this nature?

The apostle said, concerning the polemic of ago-

ny, that he who struggles, he who agonizes, will attain mastery of all things πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγχρατεύεται. Paul also fought his good fight, agonized his brave agony τὸν χαλὸν ἀγώνα ἠγώνισμαι. Did he conquer? In that strife, to conquer is to be conquered. The triumph of agony is death. And that death peradventure signifies eternal life. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." And, "let it be done in me according to Thy word." The act of begetting is also a kind of agony.

VII

THE PRETENCE OF SOCIAL CHRISTIANITY

SOCIAL Christianity? The social kingdom of Jesus Christ which the Jesuits din into our ears? What traffic can Christianity, true Christianity, have with society here below, on the earth? What is this celebrated Christian democracy?

"My kingdom is not of this world," Christ said when he saw that the end of the world did not come to pass. And also: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's." But it is necessary to recall the circumstances in which this cardinal sentence was pronounced.

Those who followed him to bring about his downfall conspired to ask him if it was lawful or not for them to pay tribute to Cæsar, the invader, the enemy of the Jewish people, the temporal authority. If he said yes, he would be represented to his people as a bad Jew, a traitor

to his people, and if he said no, he would be accused of sedition before the Roman authorities. When the question was put, Jesus asked for a piece of money and, pointing to the effigy, he asked: "Whose image and superscription hath it?" And they answered and said, "Cæsar's." And he said: "Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's." This can be interpreted as meaning: Give money to Cæsar, to the world, to society; and give to God the soul which is to be resurrected with the body. Thus he evaded the socio-economic problem, he who said that it is more difficult for a camel to pass through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven; and he revealed that his good tidings had nothing in common with socio-economic or national questions, as little with democracy or international demagogy as with nationalism.

The fourth Gospel reveals why the scribes and Pharisees caused Christ to be condemned. Or rather, the pretext they put forth. It was for

his anti-patriotism. "Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees, a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them named Caiphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not." It is plain that they sought to destroy him because of his anti-patriotism, because his kingdom was not of this world, because he was not concerned with political economy, neither with democracy nor with patriotism.

But after the reign of Constantine, when the Romanization of Christianity began, when the letter not the word of the Gospel began to be changed into something resembling the twelve tables of the law, the Cæsars set about to offer protection to the Father of the Son, to the God of Christ and of Christendom. And then that

horrible thing known as Canon Law appeared. The judicial, mundane and social conception of so-called Christianity became in time a solid fact. Saint Augustine, man of the letter, was to start his career as a jurist, skilled in the law. Saint Paul was that also, and at the same time a mystic. The mystic and the jurist contended within him. On the one side stood the law, on the other grace.

Law and duty are not Christian and religious but, as we know, legal concepts. The Christian is all grace and sacrifice. And as for the contraption "Christian democracy" it is in the same category as blue chemistry. He who supports tyranny may be a Christian equally much as he who defends democracy or civil liberty. The Christian as Christian has nothing to do with such things.

Yet, since the Christian is a man in society, a civil being, a citizen, how can he fail to be interested in the social and civic life? Ah, Christianity exacts perfect solitude; the Christian ideal is the Carthusian who forsakes his father and mother and brothers for Christ, and gives up

founding a family, gives up being a husband and a father. If the human race is to persist, if Christianity is to persist in the sense of a social and civil community of Christians, if the Church is to persist, this ideal is impossible. And herein lies what is most terrible in the agony of Christianity.

You cannot situate in history what is anti-historic, what is the negation of history: neither the resurrection of the flesh nor the immortality of the soul, neither the Letter nor the Word, neither the Gospel nor the Bible. History signifies the burying of the dead so that we may live through them. It is the dead who lead us through our study of history, and the God of Christ is not a god of the dead but of the living.

Pure Christianity, evangelical Christianity, sets itself to find eternal life beyond the confines of history and encounters only the eternal silence which frightened Pascal, whose life proved a Christian agony. History is God's thought concerning the world of man.

The Jesuits, degenerate sons of Ignatius de

Loyola, come chanting the ballad of the social kingdom of Jesus Christ, and, keeping always this political criterion in view, they seek to deal with political and socio-economic problems,—to defend private property, for example. Christ has nothing to do with socialism or with private property. Similarly, the thigh of the divine Anti-Patriot which was pierced by the lance and from which gushed blood and water, making a blind soldier believe, has nothing in common with the Sacred Heart of the Jesuits. The soldier was blind, to be sure; but he saw as soon as he was touched by the blood of him who had said that his kingdom was not of this world.

And those poor devils—devil: *diabolos*, prosecutor— who say that Jesus was a great democrat, a great revolutionary or a great republican! The passion of Christ still endures, for it is a terrible passion, is it not? to be compelled to suffer yourself to be travestied by some as a radical socialist, and by others as a nationalist, by some as a free-mason and by still others as a Jesuit. Christ was in the eyes of the high priests,

scribes and Pharisees of Judaism, a Jewish anti-patriot.

"Certainly the temptation is great for the priest who abandons the Church to become a democrat. . . . Such was the fate of Lamennais. One of the very wise decisions of the Abbé Loyson was his resistance, on this point, to all seductions, and his refusal of the overtures which radical parties never fail to offer those who break their official bonds."

Thus Renan expresses himself. But Abbé Loyson, who was known as Père Hyacinthe, married and founded a family and had children and became a citizen. Seeing himself reproduced in the flesh of other beings, without having to wait for his own resurrection, he must have felt come to life within him the desire for immortality in history, and hence arose his preoccupation with social problems.

Let it not be forgotten, albeit we utter it most reverently, that Christ was a celibate. This alone must have been enough to make him appear an anti-patriot to his biblical compatriots.

No. Democracy, civil liberty, dictatorship or tyranny have nothing to do with Christianity, any more than science has; the social work of Belgian Catholicism, for example, has no more to do with Christianity than has Pasteur. The Christian mission is not to resolve the socio-economic problem, that of poverty and wealth, of the redistribution of this world's goods; despite the fact that he who would redeem the poor from poverty must needs redeem the rich from wealth; he who would redeem the slave must needs redeem the tyrant, and will inevitably attack the death sentence, whereby he will redeem not the condemned man but the executioner. But all this does not partake of the Christian mission. Christ called unto him poor and rich, slaves and tyrants, the victim and the executioner. At the approach of doom, at the coming of death, what difference is there between riches and poverty, slavery and tyranny, the man who sentences, and the man who is executed?

"The poor we have always with us," said Christ. Not, as certain self-appointed social

Christians appear to believe, so that alms-giving, which they call charity, may be practised; but because there will always be a civic society, a society of fathers and children, and because civic society, civilization, bears poverty in its train.

In Spain the beggar sues for alms in the name of the love of God, and if nothing be given, you are supposed to reply: "For the love of God, brother, forgive me!" And as the beggar makes his appeal in the name of God, *por Dios*, he is known as a *por-diosero*. But as the other, the putative rich person, also asks his pardon for the sake of God, one might call him a *por-diosero* too. *Por-dioseros*, beggars, both.

Père Hyacinthe wrote May 13, 1901, from Jerusalem:

"Mme. Yakovlev, wife of the Russian consul at Jerusalem, laments, as we all do, that the Christian churches have made Jerusalem a city of ignorance, uncleanness, idleness, and mendicancy. It would be the same wherever priests had the governing power. See Zola's *Lourdes*. Mme. Yakovlev says that we have maligned the

ancients, the Greeks and the Romans. They had the idea of a single god, and their statues were only symbols. Their morals were not more corrupt that those of to-day, and the dignity of character and of life was greater. If this is true, what has Christianity come to bring to the world?"

Certainly it has not come to put an end to ignorance and corruption, or to introduce dignity into character and into life—what men of the world call dignity.

A Spanish priest, Jaime Balmes, wrote a book comparing Protestantism to Catholicism in their relation to civilization. Well, it may be possible to judge Protestantism and Catholicism in their bearing on civilization, but Christianity, evangelical Christianity, has nothing to do with civilization or with culture. Neither with Latin culture, written with a small *c*, curved and round, nor with the Germanic *Kultur*, with its capital *K*, whose four points jut out like barbed wire entanglements.

And as Christendom cannot live without

civilization and culture, Christianity agonizes. And so does the Christian civilization, which is an innate contradiction. It is through this agony that both Christianity and the so-called Græco-Roman or Western civilization, live. The death of one implies the death of the other. If the despairing and agonistic Christian faith were to die, our civilization would die with it, and if our civilization died, Christian faith would die. We must needs live in agony.

Pagan religions, State religions were political; Christianity is non-political. But as soon as it became Catholic, and moreover Roman, Christianity became paganized by its transformation into a State religion. There was at one stage even a Pontifical State! It became, in short, political. And its agony increased.

Is Christianity pacifist? The question seems devoid of sense. Christianity is above, or, if you prefer, below these worldly and purely moral—or perhaps purely political—distinctions between pacifism and bellicism, between militarism and civic order, between *si vis pacem, para bellum*

and *si vis bellum, para pacem.*

We have already seen that Christ said he had come to sow dissension among families, to bring fire and division and the sword—*πῦρ, διαμερισμόν, μάχαιραν.* But when he was ambushed on the Mount of Olives, and his disciples asked if they were to defend themselves with the sword, he answered that they should suffer it *this once,* and he healed the ear of him who had been wounded. And he chided Peter who had drawn his sword and wounded Malchus, servant of the high priest, saying: "Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword!"

The fourth Gospel, which is attributed to John, is the only one which tells us that he who drew his sword to defend the Master was Simon Peter, the rock on which the Roman Apostolic Catholic Church was built, the supposed founder of the dynasty which established the temporal power of the popes and preached the Crusades.

The fourth Gospel is considered the least historic in the materialistic or realistic sense of his-

tory; but in the profound sense, in the idealistic and personal sense, the fourth Gospel, the symbolic Gospel, is much more historic than the synoptic accounts. It was and continues to be the source of the agonistic history of Christianity.

Thus, in this Gospel, which is the most historic because it is the most symbolic of the four, and indeed the most living, Christ says to the symbolic founder of the pontifical Roman Catholic dynasty that he who draws the sword must perish by the sword. In September, 1870, the troops of Victor Emmanuel of Savoy entered, by the might of the sword, into pontifical Rome. And Catholic agony was increased on the day when the Vatican council proclaimed the Jesuitical doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope.

The militia of the Cross was founded on a militaristic dogma engendered in the thick of battle, in a company mustered by an old soldier, a military man who, wounded, was unfit for the militia of the sword. And within the Roman Church is discipline, *discipulina,* in which the disciple does not learn,—*non discit,*—but pas-

sively receives the ordination, the dogma, not the doctrine, from his master, or more than master, chief master, in conformity with the third degree of obedience which Loyola recommended to the Fathers and Brothers of Portugal. Ah, yes, that is indeed an agony!

Can the Roman church be expected to preach peace? Lately the Spanish bishops, in a collective document, proclaimed war for the civil protectorate—protectorate! and civil!—which the royal Government of Spain, not the Spanish people, wanted to establish in Morocco. They called that war a *crusade!* And that is the name which it must bear, not so much for the cross which the soldiers have made into an emblem, as for that other cross which they brandish like a club and with which they break the heads of infidels. Terrible struggle and terrible agony!

If the Catholic Church wants to keep itself Christian, it can preach neither war nor peace. Louis Veuillot says: "We believe that the ruins of war are with less difficulty repaired than the ruins of peace. It is quicker to rebuild a bridge,

reconstruct a house, replant an orchard, than to tear down a lupanar. As for men, they replace one another automatically; war slays fewer souls than peace. In the *Syllabus* there is no positive article against war. It is above all peace that wages war against God."

It would not be possible to write anything more blasphemous than this. Could this man have written thus after Sedan? Would he be writing it to-day, in 1925? Perhaps, for such a man acknowledges that he was mistaken. In any case, war builds more bawdy-houses than peace. And it is not so certain that men replace one another automatically, or that war kills fewer souls than peace. War saddens and darkens the soul. Peace does, too. In the *Syllabus* there will perhaps be no positive article against war, but in the Gospels there are arguments against war and against peace, for war and for peace. It is simply that war and peace are the things of this world, which is not the kingdom of Christ. Abishag the Shunammite had nothing to do with the peaceful projects of

Solomon or with the war between Solomon and Adonijah.

The struggle of Christianity, its agony, partakes neither of mundane war nor peace. It is futile to ask if mysticism is action or contemplation because it is active contemplation and contemplative action.

Nietzsche speaks of that which is beyond good and evil. Christianity is beyond war and peace. Or rather on this side of war and peace.

The Roman Church, or let us say Jesuitism, preaches peace, a peace which is the peace of conscience, implicit faith, passive submission. Leon Shestov says truly: "Let us remember that the earthly keys to the kingdom of heaven were bestowed upon Saint Peter and his successors, precisely because Peter knew enough to sleep, and slept while God, having descended among men, made ready to die on the cross." Saint Peter knew enough to sleep, or slept without knowing it. And Saint Peter was he who denied the Master until he was aroused by the crowing of the cock, who awakens sleepers.

VIII

ABSOLUTE INDIVIDUALISM

IN rejoinder to all this we are told that Christianity and Western or Greco-Roman civilization will disappear simultaneously and another civilization—whether you like this expression or not—will supervene, by way of Russia and Bolshevism, an Asiatic civilization, with Buddhistic roots, in short a Communist civilization. For Christianity is radical individualism.

Yet the real father of Russian nihilist sentiment is Dostoievski, a despairing Christian, a Christian caught in the throes of agony.

But here we stumble into the fact that there are no concepts more contradictory in themselves and lending themselves to more contradictory applications than the concepts of individualism and communism, of anarchism and socialism. It is impossible to clarify anything by the use of these terms. Those who believe that they see clearly with the aid of these terms are benighted

spirits. What would not the agonistic dialectic of Saint Paul have done with them!

Nothing is more universal than individuality. Yet the means by which people may understand one another on this plane no longer exist.

If the anarchists wish to live they must found a state, and communists must rally around individual liberty. The most radical individualists found a community. Hermits join together and form a monastery, that is, a convent of monks, *monachos*, of solitary souls. The solitaries must help each other. Bury their dead. What is more, they are committed to make history, since they do not produce children.

Yet only the hermit approaches the ideal of the individualistic life. A Spanish man of science, who, nearing sixty, set himself to learn to ride the bicycle, said to me that it was the most individualistic method of locomotion. "No, Don José," I replied, "the individualistic mode of locomotion is to walk alone, barefooted, in places where there are no roads." It is, in other words, to live alone, naked and in the desert.

Père Hyacinthe, after his rupture with the Roman Catholic Church, wrote that the Anglo-Saxon race is "the race of the strong and moral family, the race of free and energetic personality, the race of individual Christianity. . . ." It has often been said that Protestant Christianity, particularly Calvinist Christianity, is a creed of individualism. But individual Christianity exists only in celibacy; Christianity within the family is no longer pure Christianity, but a compromise with the age. To follow Christ, a man must abandon father and mother and brothers and wife and children, and if the continuation of the human race is thereby imperilled, so much the worse for it!

A universal monastery on the other hand is not viable; not viable, I mean, in the monastery which would house us all. Hence there are two classes of Christians: first, secular Christians, belonging to their age—*saecula* means generations—Christian citizens, those who bring up children in the sight of God; the other, pure Christians, those in orders, the *monachi,* inhabit-

ing a cloister. The former propagate the flesh, and with it original sin; the latter, the solitary spirit. But one can bear the world into the cloister, the age into monastic order, and even retain the spirit of the cloister intact in the midst of the world.

Both these classes, when they are of a religious character, live in intimate contradiction, in agony. The monk, who preserves his virginity and withholds his fleshly seed in whose resurrection he believes, who is called *father*—or in the case of the nun, *mother*—dreams of the immortality of the soul and of survival in history. Saint Francis of Assisi thought that he would be remembered and talked about, but he was not a real solitary, a monk, *monachus;* he was rather a little brother, *fratello*. On the other hand, the civic Christian, good citizen, father of a family, so long as he feels himself living in history, wonders if his salvation is not thereby imperilled. And though the worldly man who immures himself—or who is immured—in a monastery, strikes us as tragic, the monk of the spirit, the

solitary who perforce lives in his own age, is even more so.

The state of virginity is in the eyes of the Apostolic Roman Catholic Church a state more perfect in itself than that of marriage. It has made of marriage a sacrament, but only as a concession to the world, to history. In contrast, the men and women virgins who are vowed to the Lord live their lives anguished continually by the paternal and maternal instincts. In a convent of nuns it is natural to find a passionate cult centering around the infant Jesus, the child God.

Could Christianity—perhaps humanity—achieve its goal by constituting itself in the manner of a beehive or an ant-hill, with the fathers and mothers on one side and the sterile workers, the neuters, on the other? In the beehive and in the ant-hill the neuter bees and ants are those who toil and who bring up the new sex-endowed generation. With us it is ordinarily the father and mother who labour to maintain their progeny —the proletariat, those who create flesh and who

produce the things which serve to perpetuate material life. But spiritual life? Among the Catholic peoples it is the monks and the nuns who keep alive the religious tradition, who rear the young. But as they must rear them to live in the world, in their own time, to become fathers and mothers of families, to adapt themselves to civic and political life, an innate contradiction arises in their education. One bee might instruct another bee in the art of constructing a cell, but it could not teach a hornet how to fecundate the queen-bee.

And this contradiction, innate in monastic education for the benefit of future citizens, reached its culmination in the Company called of Jesus. The Jesuits do not relish being called monks or brothers. A monk is a Benedictine or a Carthusian; a brother is a Franciscan or a Dominican. But since the Jesuits, in order to combat the Reformation, the force which secularized and generalized primary education, devoted themselves to the education of laymen, of citizens, of future fathers of families, the other religious

orders followed their example and became jesuitized. They ended by regarding the service of education as an industry, the pedagogical industry. Instead of mendicants they became schoolmasters.

Thus Christianity, true Christianity, agonizes in the hands of these masters of the age. Jesuit pedagogy is a profoundly anti-Christian pedagogy. The Jesuit loathes the mystic. His doctrine of passive obedience, of the three degrees of obedience as expressed by Ignatius Loyola in his famous letter to the Fathers and Brothers of Portugal, is an anti-Christian and at bottom an anti-civic doctrine. With this sort of obedience, civilization becomes impossible, and progress as well.

On February 24, 1911, Père Hyacinthe wrote in his *Journal:*

"Europe is doomed, and who says Europe says Christianity. She does not need, for her death, the threat of a yellow peril, even if it be intensified by a black peril: she bears in her breast the two flails which suffice to kill her: ultramon-

tanism and revolution. *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.*

"That is why we must be content to resist without the hope of winning, and to safeguard, for an unknown future, the two-flamed torch of religion and true civilization."

Napoleon said that within a century after his death Europe would turn either Cossack or republican. His meaning was doubtless akin to that of Père Hyacinthe (who was a Napoleon in his own fashion—the first was a son of Rousseau, the second of Chateaubriand) when he spoke in the same breath of ultramontanists and revolutionaries. But what neither of them, it seems, foresaw was that the Cossacks would turn republican and the republicans Cossack; ultramontanism would turn revolutionary and revolution ultramontanist. They anticipated neither Bolshevism nor Fascism. And all this immense confusion and chaos poor Spengler tries to explain away by the architechtonic music of his downfall of the Occident (*der Untergang des Abendlandes*). Which is only another way of stating the agony of Christianity.

The yellow peril? The black peril? Peril has no colour. In so far as they participate in history, become civic and political—and warfare is, as Treitschke so aptly said, politics *par excellence*—desert-bred Mohammedans are being Christianized, becoming Christian. Which is to say, agonistic. Mohammedanism is agonizing in proselytism.

I said something about progress. Progress is not a religious value, but a civic value.

What is progress, after all? Has history a human—or, better still, a divine—goal? Does it not live at every instant? For Christ, and for those who believed in the imminent end of the world, progress was empty of meaning. One does not progress in holiness. One cannot, to-day, in the twentieth century, be more saintly than in the second, fourth, or the eleventh century. A Christian does not believe that progress can bring nearer the salvation of the soul. Historic or civic progress is not the journey of the soul towards God. Hence another agony for Christianity.

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The doctrine of progress is that of Nietzsche's superman, but the Christian is constrained to believe that the goal which he is endeavouring to reach is not the superman, but the immortal or Christian man.

Is there such a thing as progress after death? The Christian who believes in the resurrection of the flesh and who believes unqualifiedly in the immortality of the soul is obliged to ask himself that question over and over again. But the majority of simple evangelical believers like to imagine the other life as repose, as peace, as contemplative quietude, rather as "the eternalization of momentaneity," as the fusion of the past with the future, of memory and hope, in a sempiternal present. The other life or glory is for them a sort of monastery of families, a phalanstery.

Dante is the most daring of those who have painted a picture of the communities beyond the grave: that of hell, or purgatory, of paradise; but the outcasts and the elect are isolated there and can scarcely be said to form a society. And

if they do form one, Dante depicts it not as a Christian poet but as a political Ghibelline. His Divine Comedy is a Biblical and not an evangelical comedy; a terribly agonistic comedy.

The most profound disdain of Dante, the great contemner, he who lavished pity upon Francesca da Rimini, was directed at Pope Celestin V, Pietro del Murrone, canonized by the Roman church, who through cowardice renounced the papacy, made the great refusal:

Che fece per viltate il gran rifiuto.

He placed him at the gates of hell, among those who entertain no hope of dying, those who have lived their lives without infamy and without praise, among the poor negative souls who have not struggled, who have not agonized, and who must be allowed to pass without so much as a mention:

"Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa."

IX

THE FAITH OF PASCAL

AS an application to a concrete case of what I have just been saying touching the agony of Christianity, I should like to speak of the agony of Christianity in the soul of Blaise Pascal. And I am going to reproduce here, followed by some brief additions, the article I wrote concerning Pascalian faith in the special number of the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale,* April-June, 1923, dedicated to the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Pascal, June 19, 1623.

A perusal of the writings which Pascal has left behind, especially that of his *Pensées,* does not invite us to study a philosophy but to become acquainted with a man, to penetrate into the sanctuary of the universal sorrow of a soul, or, say, one that is bared to the quick beneath its hair shirt. And as he who undertakes this study is not Pascal, he hazards the risk which Pascal

himself mentions in his *Pensée 64:* "It is not in Montaigne but in myself that I find all that I see in him." Risk? No; it is not a risk. The source of Pascal's eternal strength lies in the fact that there are as many Pascals as there are men who, reading his work, feel with him and do not limit themselves merely to comprehension. It is thus that he lives on in those who are communicants in his pangs of faith. I propose therefore to present my Pascal.

Since I am a Spaniard, so no doubt is my Pascal. Was Pascal under Spanish influence? On two occasions in his *Pensées* he cites Sainte Theresa (499, 868) in order to tell us of her profound humility which was her faith. He had studied two Spaniards, one of them through Montaigne: two Spaniards or rather two Catalans, Raymond de Sabiude and Martini, the author of *Pugio fidei christianæ.* But I, who am a Basque —which is to be even more Spanish—discern the influence which two Basque spirits exerted upon him: Abbé de Saint-Cyran, the real creator of Port Royal, and Ignatius Loyola, the founder of

the Company of Jesus. It is interesting to discover that both the French Jansenism of Port Royal and Jesuitism, which fought one another so cruelly, owe their origin to two Basques. It was perhaps more than a civil war: it was a war between brothers, almost between twin brothers, like that between Jacob and Esau. And this struggle between brothers was fought within the soul of Pascal.

Pascal received the spirit of Loyola through the works of the Jesuits whom he countered; but it is not impossible that he felt these casuists to be bunglers who were destroying the original spirit of Ignatius.

In the letters of Ignatius Loyola—of Saint Ignatius—there is one which we have never been able to forget in studying the soul of Pascal, the one he sent from Rome on March 26, 1553, to the Fathers and Brothers of the Company of Jesus of Portugal, in which he establishes the three degrees of obedience. The first "consists in carrying out whatsoever is commanded, and which does not merit the name of obedience for

it does not attain to the excellence of this virtue." The second consists in "making the will of the superior one's own in such a fashion as not only to result in execution but in conformity with the sentiment, with the selfsame will and the selfsame absence of will." The third degree of obedience and the highest is that of obedience of intention or of judgment, in which one "not only wills with one's superior, but feels with him, submitting one's own judgment to that of the superior." That is, to believe true whatever the superior declares to be true. And in order to facilitate that obedience by making it rational through a sceptical process (*scepsis* is the process of rationalization concerning what is not evident). The meaning that I attribute to the word *scepsis* or σχέψις differs considerably from that ordinarily lent to the term. Scepticism signifies inquiry, not doubt, unless by the latter be understood systematic doubt as exercised by Descartes. In this sense the sceptical man is the antithesis of the dogmatic man, just as the man who seeks may be opposed to the man who affirms

before inquiry. The sceptic studies in view of finding a solution, and the solution itself may elude him: the dogmatist seeks merely such proofs as will substantiate a dogma which he has accepted in advance of any proof. The first is fond of the chase; the second of the prize. This is the sense in which the word scepticism is to be taken when I use it in connection with the Jesuits and Pascal, and it is with this same sense in mind that I call probabilism a "sceptical process." The Jesuits invented a type of probabilism against which Pascal ranged himself. He ranged himself against it because he felt it to be within him. Is the famous argument of the wager anything but a probabilist argument?

The insurgent reason of Pascal rose in arms against the third degree of obedience, but his feeling drew him towards it. When in 1705 the bull of Clement XI *Vineam Domini Sabaoth* declared that in the presence of facts denounced by the Church respectful silence does not suffice, but that it is incumbent to believe from the bottom of the heart that the decision is founded

on right and on fact, would Pascal, had he been living at the time, have submitted?

So little submission within himself, never quite succeeding in overcoming his own reason, persuaded, it may be, but never convinced touching the Catholic dogmas, Pascal held counsel with himself on the question of compliance. He told himself that he who does not submit when he *must* does not grasp the full force of reason (268). What of this word *must?* He said that submission is the practice of reason, wherein consists true Christianity (269); that reason would not yield if it did not decide that occasions exist when it is best to yield (270); but, also, that the Pope hated and feared the men of science who did not yield to him by vow (873); and he accordingly ranged himself definitely against the future doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope (876), the final stage in the Jesuit doctrine of the obedience of judgment, the basis of the Catholic faith.

Pascal wanted to submit, he preached submission to himself; meanwhile he searched every-

where, groaning as he searched, searching without finding; meanwhile the everlasting silence of space affrighted him. His faith was persuasion but not conviction.

His faith? But in what did he believe? Everything depends on what one means by faith and by believing. "It is the heart that feels God and not the reason. This is the essence of faith: God apprehended by the heart, not by the reason (278)." Elsewhere he speaks of "simple people who believe without reasoning"; and he adds that "God grants them love of Himself and hatred of themselves; he inclines their hearts to believe"; and thereafter he says that "you will never believe with a useful trust, rooted in faith, if God does not incline your heart (284)." Useful trust! Here we are still immersed in probabilism and the *wager*. Useful! It is not without justification that elsewhere he writes: "If reason were reasonable . . . (73)." The poor mathematician, the thinking reed, called Blaise Pascal, for whom Jesus spilled this or that drop of blood while he thought of him in his

agony—poor Blaise Pascal, went in quest of a useful creed which would have, as he hoped, the power to save him from his reason. He sought it in submission and in habit. "That will make you believe and stultify you.—But that is what I fear!—Why? What have you to lose? (233)" What have you to lose? There you have the utilitarian argument, probabilist, Jesuitical, and irrationalist. The calculation of probabilities is but an attempt at the rationalization of chance, of the irrational.

Did Pascal believe? He wanted to believe. And the will-to-believe, as William James, another probabilist, put it, is the only possible faith for a man endowed with mathematical intelligence, a lucid mind, and a sense of objectivity.

Pascal bristled against rational Aristotelian proofs of the existence of God (242) and remarked that "never has a canonical writer resorted to nature to prove God (243)." Concerning the three sources of belief which he mentioned: reason, habit, and inspiration (245), a free mind, stripped of prejudice, soon senses that,

as for Pascal himself, he did not believe as a result of reasoned thinking. He was, in fact, never capable of achieving belief by way of reason, although he craved it; nor did he ever fully convince himself of what was merely self-persuasion. Therein lay his intimate tragedy. He pursued his salvation through the route of a scepticism which he loved, fettered somewhat by his inner dogmatism.

In the canons of the council of the Vatican, the initial text which was dogmatically pronounced infallible, anathema is hurled against him who denies that the existence of God can be rationally and scientifically demonstrated,* even though he who denies it believes in God. Would not this anathema have fallen upon Pascal? It might be maintained that Pascal, like so many others, did not believe that God *ex-sists*, but that he *in-sists*, and sought him in his own heart, that he had no need of him for his experiments with vacuum, nor yet for his scientific

* "Naturali rationis humanæ lumine certi cognoscere posse."

activities. But he had need of him in order not to feel, for want of him, totally annihilated.

The inner life of Pascal appears as a tragedy to us, a tragedy which can be summed up in the following words of the Gospel: "I believe, help Thou mine unbelief!" This, properly speaking, is not belief, but the will to believe.

The truth to which Pascal refers when he speaks of *connaissances de cœur* is nowise rational and objective truth, is not reality. He was fully aware of this. All his effort tended indeed to create upon the natural world a supernatural world; but was he, we may ask, convinced of the objective reality of that super-nature? Convinced, no! Persuaded, perhaps. Meanwhile he delivered sermons to himself.

What is the difference between this position and that of the Pyrrhonists, of those Pyrrhonists, I mean, whom he so persistently combated because he felt that he was innately Pyrrhonist himself? There is this, that Pascal did not resign himself, did not submit to doubt, to negation, to *scepsis*, that he had need of dogma and he con-

tinually sought for it, thus stultifying himself. His logic was by no means a form of dialectic, but rather a polemic; he did not seek a synthesis betwixt thesis and antithesis; he persisted, as did Proudhon (another Pascalian in his way), in contradiction. "Only the battle pleases us not the victory (135)." He quailed before victory, which might after all be that of reason over faith. "The cruellest war God can wage against men in this life is to deprive them of that warfare which He came to bring (498)." He shrank from peace, and with reason! He trembled lest he come to grips with nature, which is reason.

But in a man, in a genuine and full-statured man, in a rational being who is conscious of his reason, does there exist a faith which envisages the possibility of rationally demonstrating the existence of God? Is the third degree of obedience according to Ignatius Loyola possible? The answer might be: without grace, no. What, then, is grace? Another tragic evasion.

When Pascal knelt to pray to the Supreme Being oblivious of the laws of chance (233),

he sued for the compliance of his own reason. Did he yield himself? He wanted, of course, to do so. He found repose, however, only with death and in death. And to-day he lives in those who, like us, have in some way touched his naked soul with the nakedness of their own souls.

* * * * *

To this it remains to add that Pascal, although in contact with the eremites of Port-Royal and an eremite himself, was not a monk; he had made no vow of celibacy or of virginity. Whether or not he died a virgin is not known; he was a citizen and even a politician; he was the civic type of man. For his campaign against the Jesuits was, at bottom, a political and civic one, and his *Provinciales* is a political work. Here we have another innate contradiction of Pascal's, another root of the agony of Christianity within him.

The same man who wrote the *Pensées* wrote the *Provinciales*. Both sprang from the same source.

Please note at the outset that we say the

Pensées and not the *Idées*. An *idea* is something solid, fixed, formulated; a *thought* is fluid, changing, free. A thought transforms itself into another thought; an idea collides with another idea. A thought might be defined as an idea in action, or an action in idea; an idea is a dogma. Men of ideas, and those who stand firmly by their ideas, rarely think. The *Pensées* of Pascal form a polemical and agonistic work. If he had written the apologetic work which he projected, we would have had something very different, and very inferior to the *Pensées*. For there can be no conclusion to the latter. An agonistic work is not an apologetic.

I read in Shestov:

". . . An *apologia* should defend God before men; it is necessary for it to recognize, for good or ill, that human reason is the court of last resort. Pascal, if he had been able to complete his work, would only have been able to express what is acceptable to men and to their reason."

Perhaps. But men accept, whether they will or no, the *unreason* of Pascal.

We believe that Shestov errs when he says that history is implacable to apostates—Pascal was, to be sure, an apostate of reason—and that no one gives ear to Pascal despite all the candles that burn before his image. One gives ear to Pascal and one hearkens to him, moreover, in agony; Shestov hearkened to him and that is why he wrote his beautiful essays.

"It is not Pascal," Shestov adds, "but Descartes who is considered the father of the new philosophy; and it is not from Pascal but from Descartes that we accept the truth; for where shall we seek truth if not in philosophy? Such is the judgment of history: one admires Pascal and one goes one's way. It is a judgment without appeal."

Bah! One does not go one's way until one has admired him, until one has loved him. The Dantesque *guarda e passa* is valid alone for those one scorns, not for those whom one admires, which is to say, loves. And do we really seek truth in philosophy? What is philosophy? Perhaps nothing but metaphysics. There is also a

meterotica which is beyond love, a *metagonica*, beyond agony and beyond dream.

The *Provinciales* sprang from the same spirit as the *Pensées* and presents us with another agony; it comprises another treatise of contradictions. The Christian who appears therein ranged against the Jesuits senses keenly wherein lies the human side, the all-too-human, the civil and social side of the latter; he knows that without the compromises of their lax ethic, ethical life in the secular world would be impossible; that the Jesuitical doctrine of grace, or rather of free will, is the only one permitting a normal civic life. Yet he senses also that this doctrine is anti-Christian. The Augustinian ethic, as well as that of Jansen and Calvin, contributes fully as much as that of the Jesuits to the agony of Christianity.

For, at bottom, ethics are one thing and religion is another. Even in the domain of ethics or, let us say, morals—for *ethics* contains the suggestion of something pedantic—to be good is not the same as doing good. There are persons who die without having transgressed the law and

without having desired the good. On the other hand, the robber who died crucified alongside Jesus remarked to his fellow victim that he blasphemed in asking Him to save them if he was the Christ: "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? We are justly punished: for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing amiss." And turning toward Jesus he said: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus said unto him: "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day thou shalt be with me in paradise." (Luke XXIII, 39-44.) At the hour of death the repentant robber believed in the kingdom of God which is not of this world, in the resurrection of the body, and in the Christ who promised him paradise, the Biblical garden in which our first parents fell. A Christian might well hold that every Christian, if not every human being, repents in the hour of death, that death in itself is a repentance and an expiation, that death purifies the sinner. Juan Sala y Serrallonga, the bandit, sung by the great Catalan

poet Juan Maragall, before his death on the gallows for the expiation of all his crimes—anger, desire, gluttony, lust, avarice, theft, murder—said to the hangman: "I shall die mumbling the *credo*, but do not put the rope aroung my neck until I have said: I believe in the resurrection of the body!"

Did Pascal in his *Provinciales* defend moral or, rather, political values in the face of values strictly religious established by the Jesuits; or did the latter values represent to him a facile, convenient policy of casuistical morality, carried out in the face of pure religiosity? One or the other thesis can be sustained. For there are two policies, two moralities, as well as two religiosities. Duplicity is the essential condition of the agony of Christianity and of the agony of our civilization. If the *Pensées* and the *Provinciales* appear to controvert each other, it is because each separate item is opposed to itself.

"One might affirm," Shestov writes, "that Pascal, if he had not encountered the *abyss*, would have remained the Pascal of the *Provinciales*."

But he encountered the abyss precisely in writing the *Provinciales*, or rather the *Provinciales* sprang from the same abyss as the *Pensées*. In plumbing the depths of morality he arrived at religion; in grazing Roman and Jansenist Catholicism he stumbled upon Christianity. For Christianity is at the bottom of Catholicism and religion is at the bottom of morality.

Pascal, the man of contradiction and of agony, foresaw that Jesuitism, with its doctrine of passive mental obedience, of implicit faith, deals the death-blow to struggle, to agony and, accordingly, to the very life of Christianity. It is Pascal, nevertheless, who in a moment of agonized despair wrote the famous: *It will stultify you.* But a Christian is able to stultify himself, to commit rational suicide; what he cannot accomplish is the stultification or brutalization of others, dealing the death-blow, that is, to the intelligence of another creature. That is just what the Jesuits do.

Only in seeking to stultify others, they contrive to stultify themselves. As a result of treat-

ing men as children, they themselves have fallen into a state of infantilism, in the most doleful sense of the term. Nowadays there is nothing in the world more besotted than a Jesuit and, above all, a Spanish Jesuit. All their pretended astuteness is pure legend. Anyone can gull them, although they regard themselves as the shrewdest fellows alive. History is to them—current history, living history, history of to-day—a sort of magic comedy. They fall into all kinds of snares. Even Leo Taxil deceived them! In them Christianity does not agonize, neither struggles nor lives, but is dead and buried. The cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the *hierocardiocracy*, is the sepulchre of the Christian religion.

"Do not ask this question of me who am ignorant; the Holy Mother Church has doctors who know how to answer you." Thus goes the answer to a question in the catechism most used in Spain, that of Father Astete, a Jesuit. And the doctors, by not teaching certain things to him who believes implicitly, have ended by not knowing these things themselves and have thus become as ignorant as he.

In his *Propos sur le Christianisme* Alain writes: "Pascal offers us opposition continually, essentially; orthodox and heretic." An orthodox heretic! Perfectly exact. *Orthodox heterodox* would have been a fatal contradiction wherein the opposing terms destroyed each other; because *heteros*—another—doctrine may be *orthos*—right, since what is is *other* than *another* is one. Heretic is clearer. For a heretic, *haereticus*, αἱρετικός is he who chooses a doctrine for himself, he who thinks freely (freely?), he who can think freely concerning the right doctrine, he who can create it, create anew the dogma which others declare they profess. Didn't something of this character happen to Pascal in his geometrical studies?

Saint Paul says in a passage somewhere—I have not noted it down and the rhythm of my life prevents me from trying to find it—that in relation to a certain doctrine he is a heretic; in this matter, he says flatly, I am a heretic. I do not here attempt to translate—something that may be candidly enough done with the gospel texts as

well as others—the Greek. What he means is, however: "In this matter I have my private opinion; it is personal, not the prevailing opinion." He implies that on this point he diverges from common interpretation, hazarding his own construction, an individual one, arising from free examination. And who will say that personal interpretation may not sometimes hit upon the common reading, that heresy may not bring about orthodoxy? All orthodoxies began by being heresies. To re-think commonplaces, to re-create them, to link thoughts with ideas, is the best way of saving them from their innate black magic. Pascal, the heretic, in thinking through Catholic ideas, the very ones which others asserted they professed, converted ideas into thoughts, dogmas into the truths of life, and thus created orthodoxy anew; something, moreover, which was opposed to implicit faith, the faith of the man in the street, the faith of the Jesuits.

The man who of his own volition stultifies himself, living in solitude, masters the beast within and so elevates himself above it far more

than he who obeys a superior *perinde ac cadaver* according to the third degree of submission (assuming the man to be intelligent and able to pass judgment upon what the superior tells him is best) and who starts praying before a stake planted in the garden of the monastery because the prior has ordained it. At best this is sheer sport and comedy, the game and comedy of command and obedience, for neither he who gives the order nor he who obeys believes that the staff, like that of the patriarch Saint Joseph, will strike roots, sprout leaves and blossom and yield fruit. All this is pure convention; it is intended to lower human pride without questioning first whether obedience of this sort does not rather exalt pride. For although it is written that he who humbles himself shall be raised, it does not follow that he will be exalted who has humbled himself for the sake of exaltation. This variety of obedience has engendered collective pride—Satanic pride—with which the Company of Jesus is fairly swollen.

Pascal grew indignant at the petty discussions

of the Jesuits, at their *distinguo*, at their paltriness. No, they are not petty! The science of the mean, probabilism, etc., etc. . . . They say to themselves: *In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnia caritas!* And in order to play at liberty they enlarge the field of doubt, calling that doubt which is not doubt at all. Read the *Metaphysique* of Father Juarez, for example, and you will see the man undertaking to slice a hair into four parts, that is perpendicularly, and then to plait a lock out of the four fibres. Or, to go no further, when they engage in historical studies —what they term history and which is scarcely more advanced than archeology—they divert themselves with counting the hairs in the pigtail of the Sphynx, to avoid looking into her eyes, into her features. Self-stultification that succeeds only in stultifying others!

If somebody should inform you that a Jesuit —at all events a Spanish Jesuit—has studied a great deal, do not credit it. It is just as if somebody had told you that one of them has travelled a good deal because he covers ten miles a day

walking around the tiny garden attached to his house.

The man of solitude, the true man of solitude that Pascal was, the man who willed to believe that Jesus shed a drop of his own blood for his sake, Blaise Pascal, could not come to terms with these soldiers.

Now apropos of science! In one of the cloisters belonging to the Company of Jesus in Spain, at Oña, one of my friends, a physician, visited a novice and, in a gallery set apart in the reserved part of the building, came upon a picture which represented the Archangel Michael with the demon, Satan, at his feet. Satan, the rebel angel, clutched in his hand a microscope! A microscope, the symbol of superanalysis.

These men try to arrest and evade the agony of Christianity, and they do so by killing it. Let it cease suffering! In order to accomplish this, they administer the deadly opium of their spiritual exercises and their education. They will end by transforming the Roman Catholic religion into a species of Thibetan Buddhism.

X

PÈRE HYACINTHE

WORKING on this anguishing study, three volumes came to my hand, consecrated to the anguishing and tortured life of Père Hyacinthe Loyson. Their author is Albert Houtin. The volumes are: *le P. Hyacinthe dans l'Eglise romaine, 1827-1869; le P. Hyacinthe réformateur catholique, 1869-1893; le P. Hyacinthe, prêtre solitaire, 1893-1912.* I have read them, devoured them rather, with growing anguish. They chronicle one of the most intense tragedies I know. Comparable to that of Pascal, to that of Lamennais, to that of Amiel, and yet more intense. For this tragedy deals with a father of the church. Although in the case of Amiel, as revealed in the new edition of his *Journal intime*, finally redeemed from the power of the Calvinist hypocrite who first edited it, the agony of his virginity appears, the clue to the mystery surrounding the melancholy life of the poor pro-

fessor of Esthetics in the Geneva of Calvin and Jean-Jacques.

Père Hyacinthe. Père! Father! It is in this fatherhood that lies the essence of his tragedy, of the agony of Christianity within him. If he forsook the church to marry, he married to have children, to perpetuate the flesh, to insure the resurrection of the flesh. But let us scrutinize his history.

Père Hyacinthe, who is perhaps forgotten these days, who is being buried in history, in the immortality of the soul, was in close contact with the men who were most prominent in his time: Montalembert, Le Play, Victor Cousin, Pàu Gratry, Renan, Guizot, Mgr. Isoard, Doellinger, Dupanloup, Pusey, Cardinal Newman, Strossmayer, Taine, Gladstone, Jules Ferry, etc., etc. . . . He fully deserved the insults of the rabid dog, Louis Veuillot.

The depth of his soul, as he himself observed, was an "inextricable mixture of mysticism and rationalism." He has left us no written work to read, but his life, which Houtin wrote at his

direction. "Lamartine, through his *Méditations poétiques,* roused him at the age of thirteen years to thought, to feeling, and to life, and he developed himself, alone, at the foot of the Pyrenees, under the influence of nature, poetry, and religion." Not of the Gospels. But more than Lamartine, it was Chateaubriand, the great sophist, the great falsifier of the genius of Christianity, who formed his spirit. Chateaubriand, the man of the loves of Atala and René. At the seminary of Saint-Sulpice he received the "revelation" of the Virgin, that is to say, the Virgin Mother. This revelation was accompanied by another revelation: that of paternity, preoccupation with civic affairs both historical and political, of the world which endures, of glory, of immortality of the soul. "I pass unknown," he said to himself, "I pass without love and without influence here below. When my bones will have whitened in the earth, when they will have lost their outlines, and their dust will no longer have a name among men, what will remain of me in this world?" He wanted to remain in this

world because he was of the world and not of the Christian kingdom of God.

He entered the order of the Sulpicians, passed like a fugitive shadow among the Dominicans, then entered the monastery of the barefoot Carmelites where the great tragedy began. He struggled against the egoism of the body which is fully as odious as individual egoism.

The temptations of the flesh commenced: "The faithful and enthusiastic practice of celibacy has led me to a state both false and unwholesome. . . . I am in love not with a woman, but with woman." What he craved, in the ultimate depths, was a son of the flesh in whom he might be resurrected. At the miniature Carmel in Passy, at the age of thirty-seven, he dreamed of "the songs of birds and also the songs and games of little children." When he converted Mrs. Meriman, who was to become his wife, it was he who was wholly converted by her to fatherhood, to the kingdom of this world. There grew up between them then that deceptive mystical alliance, which was not that of Saint Francis of

Assisi with Saint Claire, Saint Francis de Sales with Saint Jeanne de Chantal, Saint Theresa of Jesus with Saint John of the Cross. Neither was there sexuality in the love of Père Hyacinthe. There was, however, a furious passion for fatherhood, the desire to insure the resurrection of the flesh.

Let us put aside for a moment his other agonies and consider only this one. He first celebrated a mystical betrothal with Mrs. Meriman. He was forty-five years old at the time. Shortly after that he married her. His knowledge of women was confined to what he learned in confession. He did not know them, just as David did not know Abishag. Later, in his old age, when he was eighty-two years old, he wrote that a man is "but fully a priest in marriage." Priest? He meant to say *père*—father. And he cried: "God and Woman!" He wanted to say: "God and the resurrection of the flesh!" That "force superior to my will" which, "with a persistence that astonishes and at times frightens me," pushed him into marriage, was the impulse

of fatherhood unsatisfied. Such was his love. When at eighty-five he wrote: "The lofty vision of God and of the eternal city, always present in my conscious mind and still more in my *subconscious*, has been my joy as well as my strength," he did not take into account that the subconscious was the genius of that species of which Schopenhauer, the pessimistic celibate, spoke: the genius of the species in quest of faith in the resurrection of the flesh. He craved a son. He was incapable of letting the dead bury the dead, and those who believed themselves alive beget other living beings, while he took refuge in the community of those who believed in the early end of the world. "Let the Church and the child be born together, for the glory and the kingdom of our God!" He needed to insure the perpetuity of the flesh in order to insure that of the spirit; he wanted to give his son physical life so that he might transmit and breathe into him a soul. He wanted to make a monk of him in his lay condition; he wanted the monastic state to be transmitted by way of the blood: "If God grants me a son, I

shall say, sprinkling his brow with holy water: 'Remember one day that you belong to the race of Western monks! Be a monk, that is, solitary in the midst of this century of incredulity and fanaticism, of superstition and immorality; be a monk, that is, consecrated to the God of your father so that you may worship him, as did John the Baptist, in the desert of the soul, and announce his coming!' " He longed to transmit his solitude, his agony! It is not known whether or no John the Baptist was a father: he must have believed too strongly in the approaching end of the world!

Let his son therefore be a monk, let him inherit his own Christian solitude! But the hereditary monastic state gives rise to the question of politics, and the good father loathed politics which is of the kingdom of this world. He was, however, obliged to mingle in politics because he was a carnal father, and carnal fatherhood is of the kingdom of this world, not of the kingdom of God, and is subservient to history. Even the nepotism of the Popes, and that of the bishops,

and that of the parish priests who safeguard the careers of their nephews is of this and not of the Christian, world. Much of the pretended religious vocation of parish priests—not of the monks and brothers—has always resolved itself into a family and economic question. Politics, nothing but politics.

On the other hand, it is true that the firmest basis for certain political acts is founded in inheritance. This has served to fortify the British political aristocracy, educated by political traditions. From his childhood, the young lord hears politics discussed in his own home. In England there exist dynasties of conservative politicians. They wish, on the one hand, to perpetuate their race; on the other, they comprehend that politics is of the world of the flesh, of the world of inheritance, of the world wherein the dead bury the dead, of the world of history.

It is sometimes said that Christ did not found the Church, which must needs be a thing of this world of the flesh, that what he founded was the Eucharist. Yet the Eucharist, the sacrament of

the bread and wine, of the bread which is eaten and the wine which is drunk, is also a thing of this world, because the bread becomes flesh and the wine becomes blood. All this is a struggle against death, agony.

Père Hyacinthe had need of a son who would be not only an offspring of love but of faith, who would inspire him with faith in the resurrection of the flesh. Perhaps he prayed for this son to the Mother of the Creator, repeating the words of the twenty-first psalm: "My soul shall live for him and *my seed shall serve him!*" It is essential to read the pages, burning with faith, but at bottom desperate, which he wrote when a son, Paul, was born to him. He longed to turn his home into a monastery. Yet at the same time the immortality of the soul, survival in history, tortured him: "Others in whom I shall live again, son of my blood or son of my word." In his *Testament,* he bequeathed whatever he believed and hoped—whatever he willed to believe and hope—"to my son who will be, I hope, the son of my spirit more than of my blood"; to that

son whom he called "the flesh of my flesh, the blood of my heart, the breath of my soul and the fruit of my life!" to that son whom he envisaged dying: "My dear son will follow me closely perhaps into the unfathomable mystery of death; perhaps he will even precede me," he wrote in the seventy-ninth year of his life; and his son did precede him into the mystery, but not without leaving him grandchildren. Père Hyacinthe, one of the most representative men of the "stupid XIXth century," did not exploit the death of that son in whom he sought and loved himself with a kind of frenzy. It is true that, as for the son, he was not more jealous of his father, although the latter, distinguished man that he was, a poet indeed, did not bestow upon his son a name in history. If he envied him anything, it was his paternity.

Alongside this agony, what availed the other one, that of ideas? While he was still in the monastery of the Carmelites, Père Hyacinthe wrote: "I want to be able to live, by the grace of God, as though I were going to die the next

moment. . . . The Church is also here, in this garden and in this cell." But he did not quite experience this feeling. He spoke "of the more scientific and more liberal needs of his inner life." Scientific needs! The common people are wholly justified when they liken the temptation of science to the temptation of the flesh. Why, we may ask, was Père Hyacinthe shocked by this profoundly Christian judgment which Mgr. Darboy pronounced upon him: "Your error consists in believing that man has something to accomplish in this life. Wisdom consists in doing nothing and in enduring." Thereupon the poor father noted in his journal: "This skepticism has filled my soul with bitterness and doubt." Skepticism? Christian wisdom! Which could but fill him with doubt.

The poor father, who bore within himself two men, put this question to himself: "Is there not a third man who will be able to reconcile these two men? Or will he surge up only in eternity?" Thus the father and citizen, thirsting for the resurrection of the flesh and the immortality of

the soul, struggled in him with the Christian, the solitary, the monk.

He abandoned the Church when the infallibility of the Pope was proclaimed; and he abandoned it to marry and have children. He buried Lamartine in 1869, had an interview with Pius IX, mingled freely, at the *International and Permanent League for Peace*, with Protestants, Saint- Simonians, Jews and rationalists, offered himself for membership in the party known as Old Catholics, founded the National Catholic Church of Geneva, of which he became pastor, then the Gallican Catholic Church of Paris, travelled in the United States, where he lectured on religious subjects, applied in his old age for a Roman Catholic parish in the East, where the priests are allowed to marry, dreamed of uniting Christians, Jews and Moslems, and ended the long agony of his life at eighty-five, a widower bereft of his son. Yes, an orphan! He was compelled to struggle moreover, to agonize, to earn a livelihood for his wife and his children, the bread of his flesh. In the United States an

impresario offered to take him on a lecture tour, whether with or without flourish we do not know. Young girls would have crowded around him, no doubt, to get his autograph for their albums or their picture postcards! For he represented the living present. If newspapers had existed in Judea during the time of Christ, what would not have been the terrible agony of Christ!

He strove against the ultramontanists and the rationalists, and above all against himself. Before his marriage he wrote to her who was to be the mother of his child, his mother too: "Doubt lies at the bottom of my mind; it has always been there since I began to think; but faith lies at the bottom of my soul." What difference did he establish between the mind and the soul? As for the rest, to think is to doubt; to cherish ideas is another matter. Deism helps one to live, not to die, and the Christian lives but to die. "All those men," he wrote at the age of eighty-one, "have accomplished nothing because, speaking in the name of God, they have not seen him. But I who have seen him, I have done nothing

either!" The Scriptures say that he who looks on the face of God must die! And he who does not look on it dies no less!

He loathed politics and he was forced to mingle in politics. At the very instant when he longed to reanimate the agony of David, he served Solomon. The masses he celebrated after abandoning the Roman Church were, properly speaking, political masses. And during his last days with the Carmelites "he no longer celebrated mass every day, and when he did say it, it was with the same latitude that might animate a Protestant who believed in the actual presence without troubling about transubstantiation." The foregoing means nothing or it means that the good father did not celebrate the mass, did not consecrate the bread and wine in the Eucharist, did not pronounce the words of the ritual upon which, according to the Roman Catholic doctrine, depend the miracle and the mystery, apart from the state of soul of the officiating priest, since the sacrament is *ex opere operato* and not *ex opere operantis*. Or it may be that in

his attempt to escape sacrilege he took refuge in legerdemain, playing a comedy, a fiction of the mass.

He strove against the ultramontanists and the unbelieving rationalists and came to the conclusion that Christianity lies somewhere in the middle ground. This was Christianity agonizing within him. He strove against the Pharisaical fanatics who asked him if it was lawful or not to pay tribute to the Empire and to rise in revolt against the Roman pontiff and to marry in order to beget children of the flesh. He strove against the Sadducee-sceptics who asked him whose wife would be the woman, who had married seven brothers one after the other, on the day when the dead should be resurrected. He praised the Mormons who believed in the resurrection of the flesh. One of the most characteristic elements of his agony lies in the following:

"They realize that we are approaching the end of a religious progression: that Protestantism is as much side-tracked as Romanism, and that the kingdom of God shall reign on earth. . . ."

This will not, however, be a reign in which a man shall live like the angels of heaven, without marrying, without begetting children.

"They realize that theocracy is the true government for human groups. . . ."

Not for divine groups.

"Although Rome has abused the concept of theocracy, that proves nothing against the principle. They (the Mormons) realize that the relation of the sexes is a part of religion. They have erred on the question of polygamy, but we err even more. A hypocritical polygamy, which has insinuated itself into the *mores* of modern Christianity, is much more unwholesome and reprehensible than the polygamy practised by the Mormons with religious consecration; and I do not hesitate to add, with moral guarantees (for the women and children). I also praise the Mormons for their respect for the Old Testament. The world of Gentile Christianity is too far removed from its Israelite cradle. We no longer feel ourselves the offspring and continuators of the patriarchs and the prophets; we have severed

all ties with the kingdom of David. . . ."

And with that of Solomon?

". . . And we have scarcely anything but scorn for the priesthood of Aaron."

The poor father, experiencing the agony of Christianity in his own soul, yearned to return to the days when Jesus, the Christ, the Son who was not father, strove against the Pharisaical ultramontanists and the Sadducee-rationalists. The foregoing page on the Mormons is dated February 28, 1884. On March 16 of the same year, while he was still in the United States, he wrote: "But now I must needs return to my French *impasse*, to be crushed anew between the ultramontanists and the sceptics, between the revolutionaries and the reactionaries! *Deduc me, Domine, in via tua et ingrediar in veritatem tuam!*

He says somewhere that "Christianity was perhaps surpassed," and he uttered this in the midst of the anguish of thought.

"The world which lives in my thought I am powerless to create or, if I should create it, it is

only in words that pass away, not in deeds which endure!"

He could not bring himself to believe in the authority of the Word, *Logos,* without which is not anything made; he willed to believe in the eternality of the Deed, of the Flesh, perhaps of the Letter.

His last years, when he had retired from active life, from 1893 to 1912, from his sixty-sixth to his eighty-first year, proved the most tragic of his life, the years of his greatest solitude. His was a robust old age, like David's. An agony lasting many years. "I suffer greatly. I witness an agony that is both dolorous and dishonoured!" Still the world! Religious isolation caused him to suffer. Like Jacob he wrestled singlehanded with the angel of the Lord, from the setting of the sun until the breaking of day, crying: "Tell me, I pray, thy name!" He sensed within himself two men equally sincere and equally religious: the Christian and the monotheist; and the fact that he was a prey to this discord attests sufficiently the moral and reli-

gious depth of the agony within his soul. His son Paul came to the aid of the monotheist against the Christian. Paul was one of the dead who came to bury the dead within his father. No one can be a father and a Christian without agony. Christianity is the religion of the Son, not of the Father, of the virgin Son. Humanity commenced with Adam and ended with Christ. "Because the greatest sin of man is to be born," said our poet, Calderon de la Barca. In this consists the true original sin.

He wrote to his son: "Every soul, as you say, must be left face to face with the Eternal, and nobody has the right to judge save God." He held that his place was no longer with his fellow men, "but in solitude, awaiting death, or rather the other side of death." What solitude did he refer to? He recalled the words his son had said to him: "Poor father, you will end by having no other church, at the close of your life, except that of your family!" And he wrote: "I remain alone with Emilie . . . and with God." With the spirit and with the flesh, with the immortality of the soul and with the resurrection of the flesh.

Commenting on a judgment rendered by Emile Ollivier touching the father, M. Seillière once observed that he was a "a Rousseau-ist Catholic and not a rational Catholic." Apart from the obvious absurdity of "rational Christian," this assertion would be quite sound if Père Hyacinthe really descended from Rousseau; but he owes rather more to Chateaubriand or, say, to Rosseau by way of Chateaubriand. For, when all is said, is not René a Rousseau-ist Catholic?

He longed to go back to the "Aryan family groups that preceded Christianity." Upon the death of his wife, the mother—he was then eighty-five years old, and like a child—he wrote: "There is a higher law, of the world and of God which prevents the dead from speaking to the living and from manifesting themselves to the living in any manner. Against this holy law the experiments of the occultists and the apparitions of the mystics protest in vain. . . . O, silence of the dead! O, silence of God!"

Pascal, who was not a father, never spoke more vibrantly.

"If until now darkness and silence have en-

dured in Sheol, it is time that a man entered therein to bring to pass the resurrection of the dead."

Why not he? His Emilie dead, why should it not be he, the first to be reborn among the dead?

"She who was my life has been forever taken away from me, who am without hope, without consolation in this life. With this I feel the most awful doubts, involuntary doubts, *irrational* doubts, which nevertheless desolate the heart and the imagination. A kind of instinctive perception of the nothingness of being, the nothingness of things and the nothingness of persons . . . I repeat, these doubts are involuntary, but I cannot yield to them without surrendering Christian faith and also human nature, as it exists in me. This would be a sort of moral suicide, soon to be followed, no doubt, by actual suicide. For, in truth, the game would not be worth the candle: the lugubrious game of a life without reason for being, without solid substance, and without comforting hope."

These lines were written to his son Paul, the son of his Emilie. In this connection it should be pointed out that doubts are always voluntary, because doubt emanates from the will; it is the will that doubts. And the poor father, in his second childhood, in his second virginity, at eighty-three, was seeking, like a new Abishag, to rekindle David.

Some years previous to this, at the age of seventy-four, when he anticipated the death of his wife, his "mother," who believed firmly in "the survival of souls and their final salvation," he wrote apropos of Renan: "His intellectual prowess never ranged beyond doubt." But what of his will? "Renan," he added, "doubted everything, and what is in my view infinitely sad is that he continued to live by his doubt; he did not suffer from it; he amused himself with it." This is not perhaps altogether self-evident. But as for him, as for the father, he certainly agonized because of his doubt. Renan knew that truth at bottom is sad.

At Niagara Falls the father, at the age of fifty-

seven, depicted himself thus:

"My soul is a torrent come down from the mountains, driving on the waters of the years and perhaps of the centuries; down a slope that grows steeper and steeper, and by bounds that grow more and more violent, it is precipitating itself toward a catastrophe that is as inescapable as it is awe-inspiring—death; and towards that other abyss beyond death; thither where the created being shall finally resume its peaceful course in another order of things, and its ultimate stability in the bosom of God! Ever palingenesis. Emilie and I shall enter therein soon. . . ."

Rousseau, Chateaubriand (or rather René), Senancour (or rather Obermann) never spoke in more tragic accents.

This was a man, a father, a Christian caught in the agony of Christianity!

XI

CONCLUSION

I COME to the end of this study because all things must have their end in this world and perhaps in the next. But can this study properly conclude? It all depends on what you mean by conclusion. If you mean to conclude in the sense of to finish, then it starts all over again as soon as it concludes; if the word is used in its logical sense, no. The subject is not concluded.

I write this conclusion outside my native country, Spain, which is torn by the most shameful and stupid tyranny, a tyranny of military imbecility—far from my home, my family, from my eight children—I have no grandchildren as yet—and in my heart burns this civil and religious struggle. The agony of my native country in its death-throes has awakened within my soul the agony of Christianity.

I feel at once that politics is raised to the pitch of religion and religion raised to the pitch of

politics. I feel the agony of the Spanish Christ, of Christ agonizing. I feel also the agony of Europe, of the civilization which we call Christian, of Græco-Latin or Western civilization. And both go to make up the same agony. Christianity kills Western civilization and vice versa. They both live by destroying each other.

Many believe in the birth of a new religion, a religion whose origin is Jewish and Tartar: Bolshevism. A religion whose prophets are Karl Marx and Dostoievski. But was not Dostoievski a Christian? Is not *The Brothers Karamazov* a gospel?

It is said, moreover, that this France, where I write these words, whose bread I now eat and whose water I drink, water which is salted with the bones of her dead—it is said that this France is growing depopulated and is forced to endure the invasion of foreigners because the hunger of maternity and paternity is dead in her breast and because she no longer believes in the resurrection of the flesh. Do the French still believe in the immortality of the soul, in glory, in his-

tory? The tragic agony of the great war must have effectively cured the French of their faith in glory.

Here, several paces from where I now write, burns perpetually under the *Arc de l'Etoile*—an arch of imperial triumph!—the flame kindled on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, whose name will not pass into history. But is not *Unknown* a name in itself? Is not *Unknown* as valuable in the scale of things as the name of Napoleon Bonaparte? Before this tomb, fathers and mothers have knelt to pray, asking themselves if this dead, if this unknown, is not their son—Christian mothers and fathers, who believe in the resurrection of the flesh. Perhaps fathers and mothers who do not believe have also come there to pray, and even atheists. Perhaps on this tomb Christianity is reborn.

The poor unknown soldier, who perhaps believed in Christ and in the resurrection of the flesh, or who was an unbeliever or, it may be, a rationalist with faith in the immortality of the soul in history, or without faith, lies here, sleep-

ing his last sleep, covered not by earth but by stone, under the foundations of a great portal which neither opens nor shuts and whereon are graven the glorious names of the Empire. Glory?

A few days ago I was present at a patriotic ceremony, a civic procession, which marched before the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Before those bones, not interred but *enstoned*, stood the President of the goddess, France, government officials, and a number of generals in civilian clothes, all crushed, as it were, under the stones whose inscriptions proclaim the sanguinary glories of the Empire. The poor unknown soldier was, it may be, a lad whose heart and whose head were chockful of history; on the other hand, he may have loathed it.

The civic procession passed, and the chief magistrate of the goddess France, and those who accompanied him, returned to their homes; and when the cries of the nationalists and the communists, who had broken out in manifestations all afternoon, had ceased, a poor believing

mother—one who believed in the virginal maternity of Mary—silent and solitary, drew near the tomb of the Unknown Soldier and prayed: "Thy Kingdom come!" The Kingdom of God which is not of this world. And: "Hail Mary, thou art full of Grace for thou hast found favour with God; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us poor sinners now and in the hour of death, Amen!" Never was such a prayer uttered on the Acropolis! With this mother all Christian France prayed. And the poor unknown son who perhaps heard—who knows?—this prayer, dreamed in his hour of death, that his home would be resurrected on high, in heaven, in the heavens that arch over his native country, in the heavens of his gentle France, and that century upon century of his eternity would be rekindled by the kisses of his mother and the kisses of pure light bestowed by the Mother of God.

Before the tomb of the unknown Frenchman, who is far more hallowed than the average

Frenchman, I have felt the agony of Christianity in France.

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There are moments when we imagine that Europe, that the whole civilized world, is undergoing a new millennium, approaching its end, the end of the civilized world, of civilization, in the same way that the first Christians, the true evangelists, believed that the end of their world was impending. And some repeat the tragic Portuguese proverb: *isto da vontade de morrer*—this fills us with the longing to die.

We are now concerned with the bickerings of the League of Nations, of the United States of Civilization, at Geneva, near the shades of Calvin and Jean-Jacques. Near the shade, too, of Amiel, who smiles sadly while gazing—from what distance, who will say?—at this babel of conflicting political interest. Another shade smiles a bit sadly, that of Woodrow Wilson, who was another political-minded Christian, another contradiction made flesh and made spirit. Wilson was the mystic of peace, a contradiction in

terms as enormous as that of General von Moltke, the mystic of war.

The tempest of madness that swept over civilization, over the greater part of Europe, seems to have been the type of insanity that doctors impute to what is called "specific origin." Many of the agitators and dictators, the men, in short, who lead the people, are what is known as general pre-paralytics. This is but another instance of the suicide of the flesh.

Then there are those who speak of the mystery of iniquity. . . .

Let us cast a glance at the rooted tradition which identifies the scriptural sin of our first parents, that of having tasted of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with the sin of the flesh which aches to be reborn. But the flesh is no longer preoccupied with resurrection; it is not dead with the hunger and thirst of maternity and paternity, but with mere pleasure, with lust. The fountain of life has been poisoned and, along with the fountain of life, the fountain of knowledge.

In one of the gospels of Hellas, Hesiod's *Works and Days*—a text more religious than that of Homer—we are told that during the reign of peace, when the earth teems with life, when the branches of the oak are burdened with acorns, when the broad trunk harbours and nourishes the bees, and the ewes bring forth lambs—"women bear children that resemble their parents"—*ἐοικότα τέκνα γονεῦσιν*. This does not mean legitimate, but well-formed. Well-formed or, rather, healthy.

Once I was talking with an old peasant, a poor mountaineer not far from Hurdes, in the central region of Spain which is still regarded as barbarous. I asked him if what people said about the promiscuity practised in that region was true. He questioned me as to what I meant and when I explained my meaning to him: "Ah no," he replied, "not nowadays. It was different in my youth. When everybody has a clean mouth you can drink out of the same glass. In those days there was no jealousy. Jealousy appeared along with those diseases that poison the blood and

make people crazy or imbecile. Because, you see, if someone makes an idiot or crazy child for you, who is no good to you later on . . . why that, no sir, that cannot be allowed." He spoke like a sage. And perhaps, too, like a Christian. In any event, not at all like a husband in a play by Calderon de la Barca, a husband fiercely tormented by a sense of honour, which is not a Christian emotion, but a pagan one.

Through the words of the sententious old mountaineer, I have come to understand the whole tragedy of original sin and at the same time the tragedy of Christianity, and all that the Immaculate Conception of the most Holy Virgin betokens. The Mother of the God who resurrects the dead must be redeemed from the original sin.

Through these words I also came to understand the agony of our civilization. And I thought of Nietzsche.

But this sin, the sin of the flesh, is this the most execrable of sins? Is it there that we must look for the true original sin?

For Saint Paul, the most execrable sin was that of avarice. Because avarice consists in considering the means as the end. But what is the means? What is the end? Where lies the end of life? There is an avarice of the spirit and an avarice of maternity and paternity.

Kant insisted, as the supreme moral law, that we act towards our neighbour as though he were an end in himself, not a means. It was his way of translating "Love thy neighbour as thyself." But Kant was a celibate, a lay-monk, a miser. Shall we say a Christian? Perhaps he considered himself an end-in-itself. The human race was summed up in him. "Love thy neighbour as thyself." And how should one love oneself?

To this malady was added another terrible malady, daughter of spiritual avarice: envy. It is the sin of Cain, the sin of Judas Iscariot, the sin of Brutus and of Cassius, according to Dante. Cain did not slay Abel for reasons of economic rivalry, but because he envied him the favour he found in the eyes of God. Judas did not sell Christ for thirty pieces of silver, Judas who was

a miser and an envious man.

I write these lines outside my own Spain, but Spain, my daughter, Spain of the resurrection and immortality, I cherish beside me here in France, in the bosom of this France which feeds my body and spirit, my resurrection and my immortality. Parallel with the agony of Christianity, I sense in myself the agony of my Spain and the agony of my France. And I say to Spain and to France and, through them, to all Christendom and to the non-Christian peoples too: "Thy Kingdom come. . . . Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us poor sinners, now and in the hour of death." Now, now which is the hour of our agony.

"Christianity is like the cholera, which passes over a country carrying off a number of the elect, and then disappears." Père Hyacinthe heard M. Gazier, the last of the Jansenists, utter these words at a dinner, a symposium, which took place in 1880. Is not civilization another sort of malady which, through madness, carries away on its tide its own chosen ones? Cholera, when all

is said, carries men off quickly. For M. Gazier Christianity was a malady. Civilization is another. Perhaps in substance they are one and the same disease. Disease in itself is an innate contradiction.

I write these lines far from my Spain, my mother and my daughter—yes, my daughter, for I am one of her fathers—and I write them while my Spain agonizes and while Christianity agonizes within her. She wanted to propagate Christianity by the sword, she proclaimed a crusade: by the sword she will die. By a poisoned sword. The agony of my Spain is the agony of my Christianity. The agony of my Quixotism. The agony of Don Quixote.

Several days ago, at Vera, a number of poor mystical souls were strangled, even though the council of war had absolved them of guilt. They were garotted—with the iron collar fastened around their necks—because this is the measure that the present reign of terror exacts. Happy they, that they were not shot! Once I observed to the present King of Spain that we must abolish

capital punishment in order that we might do away with the hangman. He replied: "But capital punishment exists nearly everywhere. Look at the Republic of France! Here in Spain it exists without bloodshed!" He alluded to garotte, comparing it with the guillotine! But Christ died and agonized on the cross, shedding blood, the blood of the Redeemer, and my Spain agonizes and will perhaps perish on the cross of the sword, shedding blood. . . . Will it be the blood of the Redeemer too? With the dripping of the blood, the poison, it may be, will ebb away too. But Christ on the cross not only shed his blood—the blood that baptized Longinus, the blind soldier, and inspired him to believe—but he sweated "large drops of blood"— *ὡσεὶ θρόμβοι αἵματος* —in his agony on the Mount of Olives. And these drops, as it were great drops of blood falling, were the seeds of agony, the seeds of the agony of Christianity. Yet Christ prayed: "Not my will, but thine, be done."

Our Christ, our Christ, why hast thou forsaken us?

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